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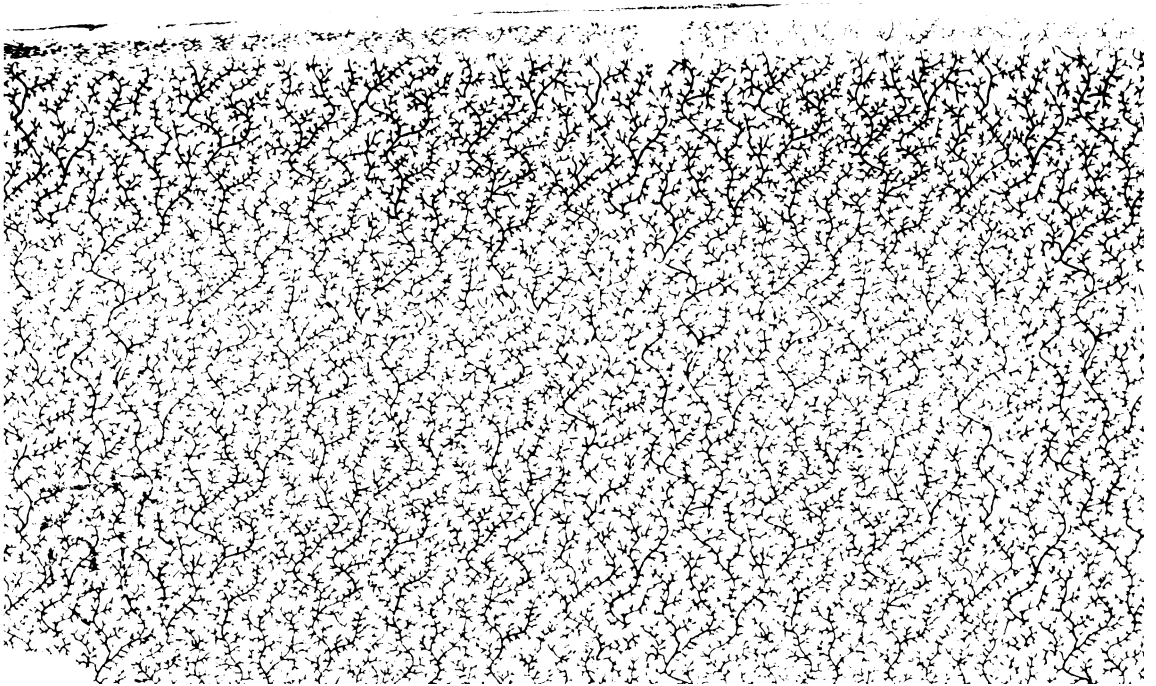

THE

BRITISH ESSAYISTS;

WITH

PREFACES,

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL,

BY

ALEXANDER CHALMERS, A. M.

VOL. XLIV.

LONDON:

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give credit to the verses he is by some supposed to have written in competition with Homer, must place him as his contemporary; the best authorities fix him in a period somewhat antecedent to Homer's; Aulus Gellius inclines to the opinion of Hesiod being posterior to Homer, but Aristophanes, in his comedy of The Frogs, places Homer in order of time after Hesiod; he introduces the poet Æschylus reciting the praises of Orpheus in the first place, secondly of Musæus, thirdly of Hesiod, and lastly of Homer, which order of placing them the old scholiast interprets to apply to the times, in which they lived; the passage is as follows:

> The holy rites of worship Orpheus taught,
> And warned me to abstain from human blood:
> In divination and the healing arts
> Musæus was my master: Hesiod gave
> The useful lesson how to till the earth,
> And mark'd the seasons when to sow the grain,
> And when to reap; but Homer, bard divine!
> Gods, to what heighth he soars, whilst he arrays
> The warrior bright in arms, directs the fight,
> And with heroic virtue fires the soul!"
>
> ARISTOPH. FROGS.

The bards of the Orphean family and others of high antiquity employed their talents in composing hymns and offices of devotion; and it is natural that such should be the first use and application of the powers of poetry; the reason is good on both sides why there should in all times have subsisted an alliance between poetry and prayer. Metre aids and is adapted to the memory; it accords to music, and is the vehicle of enthusiasm; it makes the moral doctrines of religion more sublime, and the mysterious ones more profound; it can render truth more awful, and superstition more imposing: if the eastern nations have set apart a language for their

junior to this of Chalcedon: Linus of Thebes was the son of the poet Eumolpus, and imparted to Greece the knowledge of the globes; he also before the time of Hesiod composed a poem, in which he gives the genealogy of the deities; all we know respecting it is that it differs in some particulars from Hesiod's Theogony: he paid dearly for the honour of being Hercules's preceptor, for that deified hero put Linus to death; though he gave the genealogy of the heathen gods, he is supposed to have taught a sublimer doctrine of the Unity of the Supreme Being.

Of the name of *Orpheus* grammarians reckon no fewer than five epic poets; their histories are involved in fable, and their distinctions uncertain and obscure. The Thracian Orpheus, who is the elder of the name, is said to have been the disciple of Linus, and to have lived before the Trojan war eleven ages: he was a prophet as well as a poet, and instituted many ceremonies in the Pagan theology; he delivered precepts in verse relative to the modes of initiation: the mysterious rites of Ceres and Bacchus are supposed to have originated with him, but as it is pretty clear that these rites were Egyptian, they might be introduced, but not invented, by Orpheus.

The second Orpheus was sirnamed Ciconæus or Arcas, and was also of Thracian extraction; he is said to have flourished two generations before the siege of Troy; he also was an heroic poet and wrote fables and hymns addressed to the deities. Orpheus Odrysius and Orpheus Camarinæus were epic poets, but he, who was sirnamed Crotoniates, was contemporary with Pisistratus, and lived in great favour and familiarity at the Athenian court; he is said to have written the Argonautics; the

hymns and the poems 'de Lapidibus' now in our hands.

The antients, in the true spirit of fable, ascribed miraculous powers to the harmony of Orpheus's lyre, and almost all the Roman poets have echoed his praises in the same fanciful strain. Ovid gives us a list of forest trees that danced to his lyre, as long as a gardener's calendar: (*Metam. fab.* 2. *lib.* 10.) Seneca in his 'Hercules Furens' gives him power over woods, rivers, rocks, wild beasts, and infernal spirits (*Herc. Fer.* 569.) Horace adds to these the winds, and Manilius places his lyre amongst the constellations, having enumerated all his supernatural properties in the following short but comprehensive and nervous description,

At lyra diductis per cælum cernibus inter
Sidera conspicitur, qua quondam ceperat Orpheus
Omne quod attigerat cantu; manesque per ipsos
Fecit iter, domuitque infernas carmine leges.
Huic similis honos, similisque potentia causæ:
Tunc silvas et saxa trahens, nunc sidera ducit,
Et rapit immensum mundi revolubilis orbem.

MANIL.

Of the name of Musæus there were also several poets; the elder, or Athenian Musæus, son of Antiphemus, was the scholar of Orpheus. The poetry of these antient bards was chiefly addressed to the services of religion; their hymns were chaunted as parts of divine worship, and the power of divination was ascribed to them, as the natural tribute of a barbarous multitude to men of superior and enlightened talents: the knowledge of simples, and their use in healing diseases or wounds, was amongst the arts by which these early benefactors to mankind attracted the reverence of the vulgar, and Musæus is said to have composed a poem on the cure

of diseases: this Musæus was the father of Eumolpus, and it will be found by them, who have curiosity to search into the records of these antient bards, that the great prerogatives of prophet and poet descended regularly through certain families after the manner of the Eastern and Jewish casts. Eumolpus, who was of this family, besides the hymns and verses he composed upon the mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus, possessed the art of divination by inspection of the human palm; an art of Egyptian origin.

Thamyris, the son of Philammon, is reckoned amongst the epic poets who flourished before the time of Homer: he composed a long poem, consisting of nearly three thousand lines, intitled The Theology; but as this could not be denominated an epic poem, and as no record remains of any composition of his in that branch of poetry, it is a great doubt whether it is not owing to the fictions of the early grammarians, who were industrious to detract from the originality of Homer's epic, that Thamyris and so many others are enumerated under that description of poets antecedent to Homer; for some accounts make Thamyris the eighth epic poet prior to Homer, an authority to which no credit seems due.

Marsyas and Olympus are supposed to have lived in the time of the Argonautic expedition, but they, as well as Amphion, are more celebrated for their musical talents and inventions, than for their skill in poetry: of Demodocus, Phemius and Asbolus the Centaur, supposed to have been poets antecedent to Homer, I find no particulars.

The exact time, in which Hesiod lived, as referred to the age of Homer, remains a point of controversy in the chronology of the poets: they, who

give credit to the verses he is by some supposed to have written in competition with Homer, must place him as his contemporary; the best authorities fix him in a period somewhat antecedent to Homer's; Aulus Gellius inclines to the opinion of Hesiod being posterior to Homer, but Aristophanes, in his comedy of The Frogs, places Homer in order of time after Hesiod: he introduces the poet Æschylus reciting the praises of Orpheus in the first place, secondly of Musæus, thirdly of Hesiod, and lastly of Homer, which order of placing them the old scholiast interprets to apply to the times, in which they lived; the passage is as follows:

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priests, and dedicated it as sacred to the purposes of prayer, we may well believe that the antient heathen bards, who were chiefly Asiatic Greeks, performed religious rites and ceremonies in metre, with accompaniments of music, to which they were devoted in the extreme: the hymns of David and the patriarchal prophecies were in metre, and speak for themselves; we have the same authority for knowing that the Chaldean worship was accompanied with music; the fact does not need illustration; the divinations of Musæus and the hymns of Orpheus were of the same character; initiations were performed, oracles were delivered, and even laws promulgated in verse: the influence of poetry over the human heart is coeval with it, not limited by time or country, but universal to the world in all its parts and all its periods; it is the language of rapture, springs with invention and flows with devotion; the enthusiast in love or glory breaks forth into it spontaneously, and the voice of lamentation, attuned by sensibility, falls naturally into numbers.

When I am speaking of the Oracular Poets, or Diviners, it is not possible to pass over the Sybills, the most extraordinary in this order of bards; their oracles have been agitated by the learned in all ages, and received with the utmost veneration and respect by the Greeks first, and afterwards by the Romans: heathen writers, and some of the first and most respectable fathers of the Christian Church refer to them without hesitation, and the fact of their existence rests upon such strength of testimony, as seems to amount to historical demonstration and universal assent. It appears that the Delphic and Erythrean Sybills, who were the oldest of the name, lived before the Trojan war: the verses of the Ery-

threan Sybill, foretelling the coming of Christ, are seriously referred to by Eusebius and St. Austin; they are thirty-three in number, and now in our hands. She, who was supposed to have offered the nine volumes of oracles to Tarquinius Priscus at Rome, was the Cumæan; the Chaldæan, Persic or Hebrew Sybill prophesied of Alexander of Macedon; the Hellenspontic was coeval with Solon; the Samian and others lived in later periods.

Of the Capitoline Oracles there is ample room to doubt; such a political engine in the hands of the priests, and to a certain degree under the direction of the Patrician order, offered opportunities for abuse too tempting to be withstood in a constitution so subject to popular commotions; it is true they were sparingly applied to, and never brought out but in pressing exigencies, yet those exigencies and the blind idolatry of the people encouraged the abuse by its practicability as well as by its expedience. There is a passage in Cicero's private letters, which makes confession to this very point. The original oracles were destroyed by fire together with the Capitol itself, in which they were deposited; the substitutes, which were collected in Greece and many other parts of the world to replace them, were finally burned by Stilicho in the reign of the emperor Honorius.

The lines, which have come down to us under the character of Sybilline Oracles, must be cautiously admitted; their authenticity is dubious in most parts, evidently fictitious in many, but some passages have by great authorities been considered as genuine: the great critic Bentley, speaking of them generally in his dissertations on Phalaris, calls the Sybilline Oracles now extant 'clumsy cheats:' The learned professor Whiston has investigated them with much industry and some address; he se-

parates certain parts, which he believes to be genuine, and his argument merits serious consideration: I am aware that this author must be heard with reserve in matters of prediction, forasmuch as he lived long enough to see two completions of his own Millennium: He traces the interpolated passages however with considerable sagacity, and imputes them with good appearance of reason to the heretical sectaries of the fourth century; those, which he adopts as genuine, he translates into literal prose, and they are curious records. External testimonies make strongly in favour of these passages, and it is remarkable that the sagacity of critics have urged no internal characters in evidence against them. The elder Sybill has predictions of Homer and the Trojan war; their style much resembles that of Homer himself, and antient writers do not scruple to say that Homer borrowed several of these Sybilline lines and inserted them in his poem, as the Sybill herself foretells he would do in the following words, viz.—'Then an old lying writer shall appear in that time again, counterfeiting his country, being also dim-sighted: he shall have much wit and eloquence, and shall compose a wise poem, made up of two parts, and he shall say he was born at Chios; and he shall use the same verse: he shall be the first that shall much adorn the commanders in the war by his praises, Priamus's son Hector and Achilles the son of Peleus and all others who are famous in war, and he shall make the gods to assist them, writing falsely in every thing. (*Sib. Or. lib.* viii. *v.* 357 *ad* 368.)

This is amongst the passages which Mr. Whiston thinks genuine; it is curious at least, and the reader must subscribe as much or little of his belief to it, as he thinks it deserves; but of the actual existence

of these antient prophetesses he will find sufficient testimony, and if he chuses to close with the translator in his deductions, he will conclude that—'Whilst God sent his Jewish prophets to the nation of the Jews from Moses to Malachi, he seems also to have sent all along these Gentile prophetesses to the Gentiles, for their guidance and direction and caution in religious matters.'

I shall observe in general, that these Sybilline oracles are illuminated and supported by the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, which by the best opinions is decided not to allude to Hesiod's poems, as some have interpreted it. The Sybill chaunted her oracles, standing on a stone, in a wild manner and with the voice of one that was frantic: these oracles declare the desolation of empires, and the various convulsions of nature by earthquakes, inundations, and volcanoes: some revolutions are distinctly pointed out, other things are shadowed distantly and in obscurity; but what is most extraordinary upon the whole is, that certain events, in times that must have been posterior to the composition of these verses, even admitting them to be spurious, seem to fulfil these predictions in a very singular manner. The following passage, relative to the conflagration, resurrection and renovation of all things is selected from the fourth book of oracles, which Mr. Whiston judges to be genuine: I give the translation in his words, viz. If you will not be persuaded by me, O men of an evil heart! but love unrighteousness and receive these advices with a perverse mind, a fire shall come into the world, and these signs shall appear in it, swords and the sound of a trumpet, when the sun rises, and all the world shall hear a bellowing and vehement noise, and the earth shall burn; and after the fire hath destroyed all mankind,

and all cities and rivers and seas shall be soot and ashes, and God shall extinguish this immense fire, which he had kindled, out of those bones and ashes God shall again form men; and when he hath made them as they were before, then shall the judgment be; in which God shall act justly, judging the world again; and those men who have lived wickedly, the earth shall cover them; but they who are righteous shall live again on the earth, God giving the pious spirit and life and sufficient provisions; and then all men shall see themselves. Most happy is that man! who shall be in being at that time.'

In conclusion I think it a fair remark to be made upon these famous Sybilline verses, that the evidence there is of interpolations in several parts of them makes strongly for the presumption, that there did really exist certain ancient and genuine verses, uttered by true or pretended prophetesses, called Sybills, whereupon these several forgeries were grounded: the assent of the learned, both Heathen and Christian, corroborates this opinion; but whether the copy now in our hand does or does not contain any genuine lines of these Sybills, is a question I will not now take on myself to discuss; all that need be said on this point at present is, that there are some passages, whose antiquity is established by the references and quotations of the old Heathen writers, and against which no objections can be drawn from the internal characters and marks of the text.

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THE first effusions of poetry having been addressed to prayer and worship, to the mysteries and genealogies of the deities, to religious rites, sacrifices and initiations, and to the awful promulgation of oracles by enthusiastic Sybills, chaunting forth to the astonished multitude their tremendous denunciations, the time was now in approach, when that portion of divine inspiration, which seems to be the moving spring of poetry, should branch into a new department.

When the human genius was more matured and better qualified by judgment and experience, and the thoughts, instead of being hurried along by the furious impulse of a heated fancy, began to take into sober contemplation the worldly actions of men, and the revolutions and changes of human events, operating upon society, the poet began to prepare himself by forethought and arrangement of ideas for the future purposes of composition: it became his first business to contrive a plan and groundwork for the structure of his poem: he saw that it must have uniformity, simplicity, and order, a beginning, a middle, and an end; that the main object must be interesting and important, that the incidents and accessary parts must hinge upon that object, and not wander from the central idea, on which the whole ought to rest; that a subject corresponding thereto, when elevated by language, superior to the phrase and dialogue of the vulgar,

would constitute a work more orderly and better constructed, than what arose from the sudden and abrupt effusions of unpremeditated verse.

In this manner Homer, the great poet of antiquity, and the father and founder, as I must think, of epic poetry, revolving in his capacious mind, the magnificent events of the Grecian association for the destruction of Troy, then fresh in the tradition, if not in the memories of his contemporaries, planned the great design of his immortal Iliad. With this plan arranged and settled in his thoughts beforehand, he began to give a loose to the force and powers of his imagination in strains and rhapsodies, which by frequent recitation fixed upon his memory, and, as he warmed with the advancing composition, he sallied forth in search of hearers, chaunting his verses in the assemblies and cities, that received him; his fancy working out those wonderful examples of the sublime, as he took his solitary migrations from place to place: when he made his passages by sea, and committed himself to the terrors of the ocean, the grandest scene in nature came under this view, and his plastic fancy, seizing every object that accorded to its purposes, melted and compounded it into the mass and matter of the work, on which his brain was labouring: thus with nature in his eye, inspiration at his heart, and contemplation ever active, secured by solitude against external interruption, and undisturbed by worldly cares and concerns from within, the wandering bard performed what time has never equalled, and what to all posterity will remain the standard of perfection.—*Hunc nemo in magnis sublimitate, in parvis proprietate, superaverit: idem latus ac pressus, jucundus et gravis, tum copia tum brevitate mirabilis; nec poeticâ modo sed oratoriâ virtute eminentissimus.* (*Quint. lib.* x.)

'Him no one ever excelled in sublimity on great topics, in propriety on small ones; whether diffused or compressed, gay or grave, whether for his abundance or his brevity, he is equally to be admired, nor is he supereminent for poetical talents only, but for oratorical also.'

There is no doubt but Homer composed other poems besides his Iliad and Odyssey: Aristotle in his Poetics decidedly ascribes the Margites to Homer; but as to the Ilias Minor, and Cypriacs, though it is evident these poems were in his hands, yet he seems ignorant of their author; the passage I allude to will be found in the twenty-third chapter of his Poetics; he is comparing these two poems with the Iliad and Odyssey, as furnishing subjects for the drama, and observes, that the stage could not properly draw above one or at most two plots for tragedy from the Iliad and Odyssey respectively, whereas many might be taken from the Cypriacs, and he enumerates to the amount of ten, which might be found in the Ilias Minor: it is evident by the context, that he does not think either of these poems were composed by Homer, and no less evident that he does not know to whom they are to be ascribed; their high antiquity therefore is the only point, which this celebrated critic has put out of doubt.

The Ilias Minor appears to have been a poem, which includes the taking of Troy and the return of the Greeks: the incidents of the Æneid, as far as they refer to the Trojan story, seem to have been taken from this poem, and in particular the episode of Sinon, which is amongst the dramatic subjects mentioned by Aristotle: the controversy between Ajax and Ulysses for the armour of Achilles was copied by Ovid from the same poem. If this work

is not to be given to Homer, we must believe it was written since the Iliad, from the evidence of its title; but if the author's name was lost in Aristotle's time, his antiquity is probably little short of Homer's: some scholiasts have given this poem to Lesches, but when Lesches lived and of what country he was, I find no account.

The Cypriacs are supposed to contain the love-adventures of the Trojan ladies during the siege, and probably was a poem of fiction. Herodotus has an observation in his second book upon a passage in this poem, in which Paris is said to have brought Helen from Sparta to Troy in the space of three days, whereas Homer says they were long driven about on their voyage from place to place; from this want of correspondence in a fact of such consequence, Herodotus concludes upon fair grounds of criticism, that Homer was not author of the Cypriacs, though Pindar ascribes it to him: some give the Cypriacs to Hegesias of Salamis, others to Stasinus, a poet of Cyprus, and by some Homer is said to have given this poem, written by himself, by way of portion to his daughter married to Stasinus; this daughter of Homer was called Arsephone, and his sons Theriphon and Theolaus: Nævius translated the Cypriacs into Latin verse: many more poems are ascribed to Homer, which would be tedious to particularize, they are enumerated by Suidas, whom the reader, if his curiosity so inclines him, may readily consult.

As to any other information personally respecting this great poet, it has been given to the world so ably by the late Mr. Wood, in his essay *on the original genius and writings of Homer*, that I can add nothing on the occasion, except the humble recommendation of my judgment in its favour. The in-

ternal evidence which this essayist adduces to fix the birth-place and early residence of his poet in Ionia, is both learnedly collected and satisfactorily applied: he observes that Homer, in his general manner of describing the geography of countries, speaks of them as more or less distant in proportion to their bearing from Ionia; he describes Zephyrus as a rude and boisterous wind, blowing from Thrace; this circumstance had been urged against Homer as a proof of his error in geography, and the soft and gentle quality of Zephyrus, so often celebrated by poets in all times, is quoted in aid of the charge; but the sagacity and local knowledge of Mr. Wood divert the accusation, and turn it into an argument for ascertaining the spot of Homer's nativity and residence, by reminding us, that when the poet describes the wind blowing from the Thracian mountains upon the Ægean sea, it must of course be a West wind in respect to Ionia, from which circumstance he draws his consequence that Homer was an Ionian. This argument must surely be satisfactory as to the place in which the poem was written; and when we have located Homer in Ionia, whilst he was employed in writing his poem, we have one point of doubt at least cleared up in his history to our conviction, and his accuracy in one branch of knowledge vindicated from the cavils of critics.

Having established this point, viz. that Homer was an Asiatic Greek, inhabiting the sea-coast, or an island on the coast of Ionia, and having vindicated his accuracy in geographical knowledge, the ingenious author of the essay proceeds to shew, by way of corollary from his proposition thus demonstrated, that Homer must have been a great traveller; that geographical knowledge was in those days no otherwise to be acquired; that he appears to have been

thoroughly conversant in the arts of building and navigating ships, as then understood and practised; and that his map of Greece, which both Strabo, Apollodorus the Athenian, Menogenes and Demetrius of Scepsis illustrated in so diffusive a manner, puts it out of doubt, that he must have visited the several countries, and surveyed them with attention, before he could have laid them down with such geographical accuracy: certain it is, that so great was the authority of Homer's original chart, that it was a law in some cities that the youth should learn it by heart; that Solon appealed to it for establishing the right of Athens to Salamis in preference to the claims of the Megarensians; and that territorial property and dominion were in several instances decided by referring to this Homeric chart: another evidence of Homer's travels he derives from his lively delineations of national character, which he observes are marked with such precision and supported throughout with such consistency, as not to allow us to think that he could have acquired this knowledge of mankind from any other source but his own observations.

It is more than probable Homer did not commit his poems to writing; it is mere conjecture whether that invention was actually in existence at the time he lived; there is nothing in his works that favours this conjecture, and in such a case silence is something more than negative: the retention of such compositions is certainly an astonishing effort of the human memory, but instances are not wanting of the like nature in early and uncivilized states, and the memory is capable of being expanded by habit and exercise to an extraordinary and almost unlimited compass. Unwritten compositions were always in verse; and metre was certainly used in

aid of memory. It must not however be taken for a consequence that writing first came into use when Pherecydes and Cadmus first composed in prose, as some have imagined; for it undoubtedly obtained before their time, and was probably brought into Greece from Phœnicia.

The engraving of the laws of Draco is supposed to have been the first application of that art; but it was a work of labour, and required the tool of the artist, rather than the hand of the penman. Thalès and Pythagoras left us no writings behind them, though they spread their learning over Greece, and from their schools peopled it with philosophers. The unwritten drama was long in existence before any compositions of that sort were committed to writing. Solon's laws were engraved in wood or stone, and there appears to have been but one table of them. Of Lycurgus's regulations there was no written record; the mind of the judge was the depository of the law. Draco published his laws in Olymp. xxxix; Pisistratus died in Olymp. lxiii: a century had nearly passed between the publication of these laws and the first institution of a public library at Athens; great advances no doubt were made within that period in the art of writing; nevertheless it was by no means an operation of facility in Pisistratus's time, and his compilation of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey was a work of vast labour and of royal expence: the book remained at Athens as a princely monument of his munificence and love of letters; his library was resorted to by all men of science in Greece, but copies of the work were not circulated till the time of the Ptolemies; even Alexander of Macedon, when he had possessed himself of a compleat copy of his favourite poet, locked it

up in the rich chest of which he had despoiled King Darius, as the most worthy case in which he could inclose so inestimable a treasure; when a copy of Homer was considered by a prince as a possesion so rare, it cannot be supposed his written works were in many hands: as for the detached rhapsodies, which Lycurgus in more early times brought with him out of Asia, they must have been exceeding imperfect, though it is to be presumed they were in writing.

NUMBER CXXIII.

From the scarcity of transcribers in the time of Pisistratus, and the difficulties of collecting and compiling poems, which existed only in the memories of the rhapsodists, we are led to consider the institution of the Athenian Library, as a most noble and important work; at the same time, when we reflect how many compositions of the earliest poets depended on the fidelity of memory, we cease to wonder that we have so many more records of names than of works. Many poets are enumerated antecedent to the time of Homer; some of these have been already mentioned, and very few indeed of their fragments are now in existence.

Conjecture, and even fiction, have been enviously set to work by grammarians and others within the Christian æra to found a charge of plagiarism against Homer, and to dispute his title to originality. We are told that Corinnus, who was a scholar of Pala-

medes, inventor of the Doric letters, composed a poem called the Iliad, whilst Troy was standing, in which he celebrates the war of Dardanus against the Paphlagonians, and that Homer formed himself upon his model, closely copying him: it is asserted by others, that he availed himself of the poems of Dictys the Cretan, who was of the family of Idomeneus, and lived in the time of the Trojan war: but these fables are still less probable than the story of his contest with Hesiod, and of the prize being decreed against him. Orpheus, Musæus, Eumolpus and Thamyris, all of Thrace; Marsyas, Olympus, and Midas, all of the Ionian side of the Meander, were poets antecedent to Homer; so were Amphion, Demodocus, Philammon, Phemius, Aristæus author of the Arimaspia, Isatides, Drymon, Asbolus the Centaur, Eumiclus the Cyprian, Horus of Samos, Prosnautis of Athens, and the celebrated Sybill

The five poets, who are generally styled the masters of epic poetry, are Homer, Antimachus the Colophonian, Panyasis of Halicarnassus, Pisander of Camirus, and Hesiod of Cumæ: and all these were natives of the Asiatic coast.

Before I cease speaking of Homer, I cannot excuse myself from saying something on the subject of Mr. Pope's translation, which will for ever remain a monument of his excellence in the art of versification: it was an arduous undertaking, and the translator entered upon it with a candid confession that he was—'utterly incapable of doing justice to Homer:' he also says—'That if Mr. Dryden had translated the whole work, he would no more have attempted Homer after him than Virgil, his version of whom (notwithstanding some human errors) is the most noble and spirited translation he knows in any language.' This is a declaration, that reflects as much

honour on Mr. Pope, as it does on Mr. Dryden; great as his difficulties were, he has nevertheless executed the work in such a manner as to leave stronger reasons why no man should attempt a like translation of Homer after him, than there were why he should not have undertaken it after Mr. Dryden. One thing above all surprizes me in his execution of it, which is 'The Catalogue of the Ships;' a difficulty that I should else have thought insurmountable in rhime; this however he has accomplished in the smoothest metre, and a very curious poem it is: no further attempt therefore remained to be made upon Homer, but of a translation in blank verse or in literal prose; a contemporary of eminence in the republic of letters has lately given a prose translation of the Iliad, though Mr. Pope had declared in his preface that 'no literal translation can be just to an excellent original in a superior language'—It is easy to see what Mr. Pope aims to obtain by his position, and we must interpret the expression of the word *just* to mean that no such literal translation can be equal to the spirit, though it shall be *just* to the sense of its original: he knew full well, that no translation in rhime could be literal, and he was therefore interested to premise that no literal translation could be *just*; whether he has hereby vindicated his own deviations from the sense of his author, and those pleonasms, which the shackles of rhime have to a certain degree driven him into, and probably would have driven any other man much more, must be left with the classical reader to judge for himself: some of this description, and in particular a learned Lecturer in Rhetoric, who has lately favoured the public with a collection of essays, pronounce of Mr. Pope's poem 'that it is no translation of Homer:' the same au-

thor points out the advantages of Miltonic verse; and it must be confessed that Miltonic verse seems to be that happy medium in metre, which stands the best chance of giving the compressed sense of Homer without debasing its spirit: it is a stern criticism to say that Mr. Pope's 'is no translation of Homer;' his warmest admirers will admit that it is not a close one, and probably they will not dispute but that it might be as *just*, if it had a closer resemblance to its original, notwithstanding what he says in the passage I have quoted from his preface. It is agreed therefore that an opening is still left between literal prose and fettered rhyme; I should conceive it might be a pleasant exercise for men of talents to try a few specimens from such passages in the Iliad, as they might like best, and these perhaps might engage some one or more to proceed with the work, publishing a book at a time (as it were experimentally) by which means they might avail themselves of the criticisms of their candid judges, and make their final compilation more correct: if this was ably executed, a very splendid work might in time be compleated to the honour of our nation and language, embellished with engravings of designs by our eminent masters from select scenes in each rhapsody, according to the judgment of the artist.

Small engines may set great machines in motion, as weak advocates sometimes open strong causes; in that hope, and with no other presumption whatever, I shall conclude this paper with a few lines translated from the outset of the Iliad, which the reader, whose patience has hitherto kept company with me, may or may not peruse as he thinks fit.

SING, Goddess Muse, the wrath of Peleus' son,
Destructive source of all the numerous ills
That vex'd the sons of Greece, and swept her host

Of valiant heroes to untimely death;
But their unburied bodies left to feast
The dogs of Troy and carrion birds of prey;
So Jove decreed (and let Jove's will be done!)
In that ill hour, when first contention sprang
'Twixt Agamemnon, of the armies chief,
And goddess-born Achilles. Say, what power
'Mongst heav'n's high synod stir'd the fatal strife?—
Son of Latona by almighty Jove ——
He, for the king's offence, with mortal plague
Smote the contagious camp, ven[illegible]geance divine
For the insulted honour of his priest,
Sage Chryses; to the station'd fleet of Greece,
With costly ransom off'ring to redeem
His captive daughter, came the holy seer;
The laurel garland, ensign of his God,
And golden sceptre in his hand he bore;
And thus to all, but chief the kingly sons
Of Atreus, suppliant he address'd his suit.
Kings, and ye well-appointed warriors all!
So may the Gods, who on Olympus' heights
Hold their celestial mansions, aid your arms
To level yon proud towers, and to your homes
Restore you, as to me you shall restore
My captive daughter, and her ransom take,
In awful reverence of the God I serve.
He ceas'd; th' assembled warriors all assent,
All but Atrides, he, the general voice
Opposing, with determined pride rejects
The proffer'd ransom and insults the suit.
Let me not find thee, Priest! if thou presum'st
Or here to loiter, or henceforth to come,
'Tis not that sceptre, no, nor laurel crown
Shall be thy safeguard: hence! I'll not restore
The captive thou demand'st; doom'd for her life
In distant Argos, where I reign, to ply
The housewife's loom and spread my nightly couch;
Fly, whilst thy flight can save thee, and begone!
No more; obedient to the stern decree,
The aged suitor turns his trembling steps
To the surf-beaten shore; there calls his God,
And in the bitterness of anguish prays.
Hear me, thou God, who draw'st the silver bow;

Of valiant heroes to untimely death;
But their unburied bodies left to feast
The dogs of Troy and carrion birds of prey;
So Jove decreed (and let Jove's will be done!)
In that ill hour, when first contention sprang
'Twixt Agamemnon, of the armies chief,
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'Mongst heav'n's high synod stirr'd the fatal strife!—
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Smote the contagious camp, vengeance divine
For the insulted honour of his priest,
Sage Chryses; to the station'd fleet of Greece,
With costly ransom off'ring to redeem
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Fly, whilst thy flight can save thee, and begone!
No more; obedient to the stern decree,
The aged suitor turns his trembling steps
To the surf-beaten shore; there calls his God,
And in the bitterness of anguish prays.
Hear me, thou God, who draw'st the silver bow;

Hear thou, whom Chrysa worships; hear, thou king
Of Tenedos, of Cilla; Smintheus, hear!
And, if thy priest hath ever deck'd thy shrine
Or on thy flaming altars offer'd up
Grateful oblations, send thine arrows forth;
Strike, strike these tyrants and avenge my tears!
Thus Chryses pray'd, nor was the pray'r unheard;
Quick at his call the vengeful God uprear'd
His tow'ring stature on Olympus' top;
Behind him hung his bow; onward he strode
Terrific, black as night, and as he shook
His quiver'd arrows, the affrighted air
Echo'd the dreadful knell: now from aloft
Wide o'er the subject fleet he glanc'd his eye,
And from his silver bow with sounding string
Launch'd th' unerring shaft: on mules and dogs
The missile death alighted; next to man
Spread the contagion dire; then thro' the camp
Frequent and sad gleam'd the funereal fires.
Nine mournful days they gleam'd; haply the tenth
With better omens rose; Achilles now
Conven'd the Grecian chiefs, thereto inspir'd
By Jove's fair consort, for the Goddess mourn'd
The desolating mischief: at the call
Of great Achilles none delay'd to come,
And in full council thus the hero spake.
If quick retreat from this contagious shore
Might save a remnant of our war-worn host,
My voice, Atrides, wou'd advise retreat;
But not for me such counsels: call your seers,
Prophets and priests, interpreters of dreams,
For Jove holds commerce with mankind in sleep,
And let that holy convocation say
Why falls Apollo's vengeance on our heads;
And if oblations can avail for peace
And intermission from this wasting plague,
Let victims bleed by hecatombs, and glut
His altars, so his anger be appeas'd.

NUMBER CXXIV.

Hesiod's heroic holds a middle place between the Orphean and Homeric style; his Genealogy of the Deities resembling the former, and his Shield of Hercules at due distance following the latter: his famous poem in praise of illustrious women is lost; from the words ἢ οἵη, with which it opened, it came in time to be generally known by the name of the *Eoics*, or *The Great Eoics*, and this title by misinterpretation has been construed to refer to the proper name of some favourite mistress, whom he chose to make the heroine of his poem: the poet being born at Ascra, a small village in the neighbourhood of Mount Helicon, *Eoa* was supposed to have been a beautiful damsel of Ascra, whom he was in love with: this poem seems to have been considered as the best work of the author, at least it was that which brought him most in favour with his contemporaries, and gained him some admirers, who even preferred him to Homer; we cannot wonder if that sex at least who were the objects of his panegyric, were the warmest in his praise. I suspect that Homer did not pay much court to the ladies in his Margites, and as for the Cypriacs, they were professedly written to expose the gallantries of the fair sex; the character of Penelope however in the Odyssey is a standard of conjugal fidelity, and Helen, though a frail heroine in the Iliad, is painted with such delicate touches as to recommend her in the most interesting manner to our pity and forgiveness.

Hesiod's address carried every thing before it, and the choice of his subjects shews that popularity was his study, for not content with engaging the fair sex in his favour by the gallantry of *The Great Eoics*, he flattered the heroes of his time, or at least the descendants of heroes, by a poem, which he intitled *The Heroic Genealogy:* as one was a professed panegyric of beautiful and illustrious women, the other was written in the praise of brave and distinguished men: if this heroic catalogue comprized only the great and noble of his own sex, his *Times* and *Seasons* were addressed to the community at large, and conveyed instruction to the husbandman and labourer; nor was this all, for great authorities have given to Hesiod the fables commonly ascribed to Æsop, who is supposed only to have made some additions to Hesiod's collection; if this were so, we have another strong reason for his popularity—'For fables, as Quintilian well observes, are above all things calculated to win the hearts of the vulgar and unlearned, who delight in pleasing tales and fictions, and are easily led away with what they delight in.' —In short Hesiod seems to have written to all ranks, degrees and descriptions of people; to rich and poor, to the learned and unlearned, to men, women, and even to the deities themselves.

Can we be surprized then if this politic and pleasing author was the idol of his time, and gained the prize even though Homer was his competitor? His contemporaries gave judgment in his favour, but posterity revokes the decree: Quintilian, who probably had all his works before him, pronounces of Hesiod,—'That he rarely soars; that great part of his works are nothing else but catalogues and strings of names, intermixed however with useful precepts

gracefully delivered and appositely addressed; in fine, that his merit consists in the middle style of writing.'—Talents of this sort probably recommended him to the unreserved applause of all, whom superiority of genius in another affects with envy and provokes to detraction. Many such, besides the grammarian Daphidas, were found to persecute the name of Homer with malevolence, whilst he rose superior to their attacks: the rhapsodists, whose vocation it was in public and private to entertain the company with their recitations, were so constantly employed in repeating Homer's poems preferably to all others, that in time they were universally called Homerists: Demetrius Phalereus at length introduced them into the theatres, and made them chaunt the poems of his favourite author on the stage: the poet Simonides, celebrated for his memory, repeated long passages of Homer, sitting in the public theatre on a seat erected for him on the stage for that purpose; Cassander, king of Macedonia, had the whole Iliad and Odyssey by heart, and was continually repeating, not in company only, but in his private hours to himself: Stesichorus also, the sublimest of all poets next to Homer, and his greatest imitator, was remarkably fond of chaunting forth passages in the Iliad and Odyssey; it is related also that he used frequently to repeat verses of Hesiod, Archilochus, Mimnermus, and Phocylides the Milesian, who is the supposed author of the poem entitled *Parænesis*, yet extant. We are obliged to the grammarians for many scraps or fragments from the wrecks of authors, but in the case of Hesiod's Eoics meet with one remnant only preserved by Pausanias, and this relates to Iphigenia, who, by Hesiod's account, was by the favour of Diana reprieved from extinction and

immortalized in the person of the goddess Hecate.

As for the bards of the Orphean family, it is difficult to adjust their chronologies and descents; I have already enumerated five poets of the name of Orpheus, and said in general terms, that there were several of the name of Musæus; they may be thus described; viz. first, Musæus, son of Antiphemus and disciple of Orpheus, styled an epic poet; he wrote a long poem of four thousand verses, containing precepts, addressed to his son Eumolpus, and thence entitled *The Eumolpiad*; he wrote a hymn to Ceres, a poem on the cure of diseases, and published certain prophetic verses, though his title to these has been brought into dispute by the artifices of one Onomacritus, a plagiarist and pretended diviner in the time of Hipparchus, who put off these verses of Musæus as his own. The second Musæus was grandson of the first and son of Eumolpus; various poems are given to this Musæus, particularly The Theogony, The Sphere, The Mysteries of Initiation and Lustration, The Titans, &c. The third Musæus, a Theban, was son of Thamyris and grandson of Philammon; he flourished about the time of the Trojan war: his father Thamyris is recorded by Homer.

> And Dorion fam'd for Thamyris' disgrace,
> Superior once of all the tuneful race,
> Till vain of mortals' empty praise he strove
> To match the seed of cloud-compelling Jove;
> Too daring bard! whose unsuccessful pride
> Th' immortal Muses in their art defy'd;
> Th' avenging Muses of the light of day
> Depriv'd his eyes, and snatch'd his voice away;
> No more his heav'nly voice was heard to sing,
> His hand no more awak'd the silver string.
>
> POPE, Il. 2.

Such was the fate of blind Thamyris, but he has double security for immortality, having a place not only in the Iliad of Homer, but also in the Paradise Lost of Milton:

> Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
> That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
> Nightly I visit; nor sometimes forget
> Those other two equall'd with me in fate,
> So were I equall'd with them in renown,
> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides.
>
> BOOK III.

Thus although the works of this famous bard have totally perished, and 'his heavenly voice is no more heard to sing,' yet it has been his singular good fortune to be celebrated by the greatest poet of antiquity, and ranked with that very poet by the greatest of the moderns; and all three involved in the same visitation of blindness; an extraordinary concurrence!

The fourth Musæus was son of Orpheus and President of the Eleusynian Mysteries: this is the Musæus, whom Justin Martyr says was instructed by his father in a more rational religion than he practised in the temple of Ceres, and taught the knowledge and worship of one supreme God, creator of all things. The fifth was Musæus of Ephesus, an epic poet; the sixth a grammarian, whose treatise on the Isthmian games is quoted by Euripides; and the seventh and last, is that Musæus, whom the poet Martial mentions for having written *Pathicissimos libellos*, and the author as it is probable of the little poem upon Hero and Leander, now extant, which Scaliger so much admires.

Archilochus flourished in Olymp. xxiii. and was a very early writer of Iambics;—He excels, says Quintilian, in energy of style; his periods strong,

compressed and brilliant, replete with life and vigour: so that if he is second to any it is from defect of subject, not from natural inferiority of genius.

He adds, that—'Aristarchus was of opinion, that of all the writers of Iambic verse Archilochus alone carried it to perfection. Athenæus has preserved a little epigram of his no otherwise worth recording than as it is the only relick of his muse, except one distich in long and short verse, purporting that he was devoted to Mars and the Muses; the epigram may be translated as follows:

> Glutton, we ask thee not to be our guest,
> It is thy belly bids thee to our feast.
>
> ARCHIL.

Archilochus fell in battle by the hand of Calondas, who immolated his own son to the manes of the poet to atone the vengeance of Apollo: he was a man of great private virtue and distinguished courage, but a severe unsparing satirist.

Tisias, commonly called Stesichorus from his invention of the chorus, which he sung to the accompaniment of his harp, was contemporary with Solon, and born at Himera in the island of Sicily; as a lyric poet he was unequalled by any of the Greeks but Pindar; his subjects were all of the epic cast, and he oftentimes rose to a sublimity, that rivalled Homer, upon whose model he formed himself: this he would have done throughout, according to the opinion of Quintilian, if his genius had not led him into a redundancy, but his characters are drawn with great dignity and preserved justly. He did not visit Greece till he was far advanced in age, and died in Olym. lvi. in the city of Catana in his native island of Sicily, where he was buried at the public cost with distinguished ceremony and mag-

nificence. A tomb was erected to his memory near one of the city gates, which was thenceforward called the gate of Stesichorus; this tomb was composed of eight columns, had eight steps and eight angles after the cabalistical numbers of Pythagoras, whose mysterious philosophy was then in general vogue; the cubic number of eight was emblematic of strength, solidity, and magnificence, and from this tomb of Stesichorus arose the Greek proverb Πάντα Ὀκτώ, by which was meant any thing perfect and compleat. Phalaris of Agrigentum erected a temple to his name and decreed him divine honours; all the cities in Sicily conspired in lamenting the death of their favorite poet, and vied with each other in the trophies they dedicated to his memory.

Epimenides of Crete, the epic poet, was contemporary with Solon, and there is a letter in the life of that great man inserted by the sophists, which is feigned to have been written by Solon in his exile to Epimenides: this poet, as well as his contemporary Aristæas, is said to have had the faculty of stopping the functions of life and recalling them at pleasure: Aristæas wrote a poem entitled Arimaspea, containing the history of the northern Arimaspeans, a people of Scythia, whom he describes as the fiercest of all human beings, and pretends that they have only one eye; he also composed an heroic poem on the genealogy of the deities: Strabo says, if ever there was a quack in the world, this Aristæas was one. Simonides the poet lived in the court of Hipparchus, and was much caressed by that elegant prince; he was a pleasing courtly writer, and excelled in the pathetic. Alcæus was poet, musician, and warrior; Quintilian gives him great praise for the boldness of his satire

against tyrants, and occasionally for the moral tendency of his writings, but admits that sometimes his muse is loose and wanton: it appears from some fragments preserved by Athenæus, that he wrote several poems or sonnets in praise of drinking; there is also a fragment in the martial style, describing the variety of armour, with which his house was adorned. Callimachus, Theocritus, Anacreon and Sappho, are to a certain degree known to us by their remains: Every branch of poetry, but the drama, was at this æra at its greatest perfection.

NUMBER CXXV.

There is a considerable fragment in Athenæus of a love-poem written by Hermesianax of Colophon to his mistress Leontium; the poet recommends his passion by telling her how love has triumphed over all the great geniuses in their turns, and begins with the instances of Orpheus and Musæus, and brings them down to Sophocles, Euripides, Pythagoras, and Socrates. This Hermesianax must have been a contemporary of Epicurus, forasmuch as Leontium was the mistress of that philosopher as well as of his disciple Metrodorus: it is plain therefore that the learned Gerard John Vossius did not advert to this circumstance, when he puts Hermesianax amongst the poets of a doubtful age. Leontium was an Athenian courtezan, no less celebrated for science than beauty, for she engaged in a philosophical controversy with Theophrastus, of

which Cicero takes notice (*lib.* 1, *de Nat. Deor.*) Pliny also records an anecdote of her being painted by Theodorus sitting in a studious attitude.

This fragment may not improperly be called the amours of the Greek poets, and as it relates to many, of whom we have been speaking, and is withal a very curious specimen of an author very little known even by name, I have inserted the following translation in the hope that it will not be unacceptable to my readers.

Οἵην μὲν φίλος υἱὸς ἀνήγαγεν Οἰάγροιο,
Αἰγιόπην θρήσσαν τειλάμενος κιθάρη——
&c. Athen. lib. xiii.

Such was the nymph, whom Orpheus led,
From the dark mansions of the dead,
Where Charon with his lazy boat
Ferries o'er Lethe's sedgy moat;
Th' undaunted minstrel smites the strings,
His strain thro' hell's vast concave rings:
Cocytus hears the plaintive theme,
And refluent turns his pitying stream;
Three-headed Cerberus, by fate
Posted at Pluto's iron gate,
Low-crouching rolls his haggard eyes
Ecstatic and foregoes his prize:
With ears erect at hell's wide doors
Lies listening as the songster soars;
Thus music charm'd the realms beneath,
And beauty triumph'd over death.

The bard, whom night's pale regent bore
In secret on the Athenian shore,
Musæus, felt the sacred flame,
And burnt for the fair Theban dame
Antiope, whom mighty Love
Made pregnant by imperial Jove;
The poet plied his amorous strain,
Press'd the fond fair, nor press'd in vain,

For Ceres, who the veil undrew,
That screen'd her mysteries from his view,
Propitious this kind truth reveal'd,
That woman close besieg'd will yield.

Old Hesiod too his native shade
Made vocal to th' Ascrean maid,
The bard his heav'n-directed lore
Forsook, and hymn'd the gods no more:
Soft love-sick ditties now he sung,
Love touch'd his harp, love tun'd his tongue,
Silent his Heliconian lyre,
And love's put out religion's fire.

Homer, of all past bards the prime,
And wonder of all future time,
Whom Jove with wit sublimely blest,
And touch'd with purest fire his breast,
From gods and heroes turn'd away
To warble the domestic lay,
And wand'ring to the desart isle,
On whose parch'd sands no seasons smile,
In distant Ithaca was seen
Chaunting the suit-repelling Queen.

Mimnermus tun'd his am'rous lay,
When time had turn'd his temples grey;
Love revell'd in his aged veins,
Soft was his lyre, and sweet his strains;
Frequenter of the wanton feast,
Nanno his theme, and youth his guest.

Antimachus with tender art
Pour'd forth the sorrows of his heart;
In her Dardanian grave he laid
Chryseis his beloved maid;
And thence returning sad beside
Pactolus' melancholy tide,
To Colophon the minstrel came,
Still sighing forth the mournful name,
Till lenient time his grief appeas'd,
And tears by long indulgence ceas'd.

Alcæus strung his sounding lyre,
And smote it with a hand of fire,

To Sappho, fondest of the fair,
Chaunting the loud and lofty air.

Whilst old Anacreon, wet with wine,
And crown'd with wreaths of Lesbian vine,
To his unnatural minion sung
Ditties that put to blush the young.

Ev'n Sophocles, whose honey'd lore
Rivals the bee's delicious store,
Chorus'd the praise of wine and love,
Choicest of all the gifts of Jove.

Euripides, whose tragic breast
No yielding faïr one ever prest,
At length in his obdurate heart
Felt love's revengeful rankling dart,
Thro' Macedon with furious joy
Panting he chas'd the pathic boy;
Till vengeance met him in the way,
And blood-hounds made the bard their prey.

Philoxenus, by wood-nymphs bred
On fam'd Cithæron's sacred head,
And train'd to music, wine and song,
'Midst orgies of the frantic throng,
When beauteous Galatea died,
His flute and thyrsus cast aside;
And wand'ring to thy pensive coast,
Sad Melos, where his love was lost,
Each night thro' the responsive air
Thy echoes witness'd his despair:
Still, still his plaintive harp was heard,
Soft as the nightly-singing bird.

Philotas too in Battis' praise
Sung his long-winded roundelays;
His statue in the Coan grove
Now breathes in brass perpetual love.

The mortified abstemious sage,
Deep read in learning's crabbed page,
Pythagoras, whose boundless soul
Scal'd the wide globe from pole to pole,

Earth, planets, seas and heav'n above,
Yet found no spot secure from love;
With love declines unequal war,
And trembling drags his conqueror's car,
Theano clasp'd him in her arms,
And wisdom stoop'd to beauty's charms

Ev'n Socrates, whose moral mind
With truth enlighten'd all mankind,
When at Aspatia's side he sate,
Still found no end to love's debate,
For strong indeed must be that heart
Where love finds no unguarded part.

Sage Aristippus by right rule
Of logic purg'd the Sophist's school,
Check'd folly in its headlong course,
And swept it down by reason's force;
'Till Venus aim'd the heart-felt blow
And laid the mighty victor low.

A little before the time that Pisistratus established his tyranny at Athens, the people of Greece had distinguished certain of their most eminent sages by the denomination of the Seven Wise Men. This flattering pre-eminence seems to have been distributed with more attention to the separate claims of the different states, than to the particular pretensions of the persons, who composed this celebrated junto: if any one community had affected to monopolize the prerogative of wisdom, others would hardly have subscribed their assent to so partial a distribution; and yet when such distinguished characters as Pythagoras, Anacharsis the Scythian, Mieon, Phereoydes, Epimenides, and Pisistratus himself, were excluded, or at best rated only as wise-men-extraordinary, many of their admirers complained of the exclusion, and insisted on their being rated in the list; hence arises a difficulty in determining the precise number of the principals: the

common account however is as follows, viz. Solon of Athens, Thales of Miletus, Periander of Corinth, Cleobulus the Rhodian, Chilon the Lacedæmonian, Bias of Priene, and Pittacus of Mitylene.

This distribution was well calculated to inspire emulation amongst rival states, and to that emulation Greece was indebted for the conspicuous figure she made in the world of letters. The Ionic and Italian schools of philosophy were established under Thales and Pythagoras; the first was supported by Anaximander the successor of Thales, by Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Diogenes, Zeno and other illustrious men; Pythagoras's school devolved upon Empedocles, Heraclitus, Zenophanes, Democritus, Pyrrho and Epicurus. The original tenets of the first masters were by no means adhered to by their descendants; the wanderings of error are not to be restrained by system; hypothesis was built upon hypothesis, and the labyrinth at length became too intricate to be unravelled: sparks of light were in the mean time struck out by the active collision of wit; noble truths occasionally broke forth, and sayings, worthy to be registered amongst the doctrines of Christian revelation, fell from heathen lips: in the lofty spirit of philosophy they insulted pain, resisted pleasure, and set at defiance death itself. Respect is due to so much dignity of character; the meek forgiving tenets, which Christianity inculcates, were touched upon but lightly and by few; some however by the force of intellect followed the light of reason into a future state of immortality; they appear to have contemplated the Divine Essence, as he is, simple and supreme, and not filtered into attributes corruptly personified by a synod of divinities. Of such men we must think and speak with admiration and affection.

Thales, the founder of the Ionic school, was a great man and a good citizen; he studied geometry under Egyptian masters, and introduced some new discoveries in astronomy and the celestial sphere, regulating and correcting the Greek Calendar, which Solon, about the same time, made some attempts to reform at Athens. This he did by bringing it to a conformity with the Hebrew calendar, except that his year began with the summer solstice, and that of the Hebrews with the vernal. Now the Hebrew calendar comprised twelve months, and each month severally comprised the same, or nearly the same, number of days as our's. This appears by an examination of Moses's account of the deluge in the seventh chapter of Genesis.

Amongst other nations the calendar was exceedingly vague and unsettled: the Egyptians measured their year by four months; the Arcadians by three; the Carians and Acarnanians by six; and the people of Alba by ten; at the same time all these nations were in the practice of making up the year to its natural completion by intercalendary months or days. In the time of Romulus the Romans followed the calendar of the Albanians; and of the ten months, which their year consisted of, four comprized thirty-one days each, viz. Martius, Maius, Quintilis, October; the six other consisted of thirty days, and were named Aprilis, Junius, Sextilis, September, November, December. By this calendar Romulus's year regularly consisted of only 304 days, and to compleat the natural period he was obliged to resort to the expedient of intercalendary days.

Numa was too much of a philosopher not to seek a remedy for these deficiencies, and added two months to his year: the former of these he named

Januarius from bifrons Janus, one of whose faces was supposed to look towards the past, and the other towards the succeeding year; the other new month he called Februarius, from Februus, the deity presiding over lustrations; this being the month for the religious rites of the Dii Manes, it was made to consist of twenty-eight days, being an even number; all the others, conformably to the superstition of the times, consisted of odd numbers as more propitious, and accordingly Martius, Maius, Quintilis, October, had each thirty-one days, and the other seven, twenty-nine days, so that the year, thus regulated, had 355 days, and it was left to the priests to make up the residue with supplementary days.

This commission became a dangerous prerogative in the hands of the sacerdotal order, and was executed with much irregularity and abuse; they lengthened and shortened the natural period of the year, as interest influenced them to accord to the prolongation or abbreviation of the annual magistracies dependent thereupon. In this state things were suffered to remain till Julius Cæsar succeeded to the pontificate; he then undertook a reform of the calendar, being in his third consulate, his colleague being Œmilius Lepidus. Assisted by the best astronomers of the time, particularly the philosopher Sosigenes, he extended the year of his reform to 442 days, and thenceforward ordained that the year should consist of 365 days, distributed into months as it now stands, except that he added one day to February every fifth year, and not every third.

Thales died in the fifty-eighth Olympiad in extreme old age: the famous philosopher Pherecydes died a few years before him of that horrible distem-

per called the Morbus Pediculosus, and in his last illness wrote, or is supposed to have written, to Thales as follows:

PHERECYDES TO THALES.

'May your death be easy, when the hour shall come! for my part, when your letter reached me, I was sinking under the attack of a most loathsome disease accompanied with a continual fever. I have therefore given it in charge to my friends, as soon as they shall have committed my remains to the earth, to convey my manuscripts to your hands. If you and the rest of your wise fraternity shall on perusal approve of making them public, do so; otherwise let them not see the light; certainly they do not satisfy my judgment in all particulars; the best of us are liable to error; the truth of things is not discoverable by human sagacity, and I am justly doubtful of myself: upon questions of theology I have been cautious how I have committed myself: other matters I have treated with less reserve; in all cases however I suggest rather than dictate.

'Though I feel my dissolution approaching and inevitable, I have not absolutely dismissed my physicians and friends; but as my disease is infectious, I do not let them enter my doors, but have contrived a signal for informing them of my condition, and have warned them to prepare themselves for paying the last offices to my corpse to-morrow.

'Farewell for ever!'

NUMBER CXXVI.

Ignotum Tragicæ genus invenisse Camenæ
Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis
Qui canerent agerentque peruncti fæcibus ora.

HORAT.

HAVING carried down the history of Athens to that period, when a new species of poetry made its appearance, I propose in this place to treat of the origin and introduction of the drama: in doing this, my chief study will be to methodize and arrange the matter, which other writers have thrown out, sensible that in a subject so often exhausted very little else can now remain to be done.

Aristotle says—'That Homer alone properly deserves the name of poet, not only as being superior to all others so called, but as the first who prepared the way for the introduction of the drama; and this he did, not merely by the display of his powers on grave and tragic subjects, but inasmuch as he suggested the first plot and device for comedy also; not founding it upon coarse and opprobrious invective, but upon wholesome and facetious ridicule: so that his Margites bears the same analogy to comedy, as his Iliad and Odyssey do to tragedy.'

This assertion in favour of Homer coming from such high authority has been adopted by the scholiasts, critics, and commentators, who have treated either of that great poet or of the drama from the time when it was made to the present: but it should

be observed that Aristotle is not here speaking of the drama professedly as a chronologist, but reviewing it as an object of criticism, and under this view it can no otherwise come into contemplation than in its more advanced and perfect state, when built upon the model of Homer's fables and characters; after it had thrown off the barbarous traces of its real origin, and had quitted Bacchus and the Satyrs. Of tragedy, as a written and consistent poem, Homer may well be stiled the father; for when Phrynichus and Æschylus introduced on the scene Μύθους καὶ Πάθη, the stories and calamities of heroes, tragedy became Homeric, or in other words assumed a dignity of tone and character, that was copied from the epic of Homer, as comedy was from his iambic; and agreeably to this Aristotle names Epicharmus as the first comic poet, who was professedly a copyist of the Margites.

Now by settling the dates of a few well-established facts we shall bring this question into closer view. Pisistratus after a broken reign of thirty-three years died in Olymp. lxiii. whereas the Marmor Chronicon records, that the first tragedy at Athens was made by Thespis, and acted on a waggon in Olymp. lxi. Suidas confirms this record: from the same authority (viz. Mar. Chron.) we collect that Susarion made the first comedy at Athens, and acted it on a moveable scaffold in the middle of Olymp. liv. being one year before Pisistratus established his tyranny. By these dates it appears that comedy was made and acted at Athens several years before the compilation of Homer's epic poems, and tragedy before or at that time, admitting for the present that Thespis was the first who made tragedies, and that the record above cited was the date of his first tragedy.

I am aware that these facts alone will not prove that the inventors of the drama did not copy from Homer; for it cannot be denied that Thespis and even Susarion might have resorted to his poems, before they were compiled by Pisistratus; and as for Thespis, if we were to admit the tragedies, which Suidas ascribes to him, to be genuine, it is evident from their titles that some of them were built upon Homeric fables; but good critics find strong reasons to object to this list, which Suidas has given us, and I must think it a fair presumption against their authenticity, that Aristotle, who gives Homer the credit of furnishing the first suggestions of the drama, does not instance Thespis's tragedies; for had they been what Suidas reports, it can hardly be supposed that Aristotle would have overlooked an instance so much to his purpose, or failed to have quoted Thespis, as the first tragic writer, when he names Epicharmus as the first comic one, who copied from Homer.

Plutarch in his Symposia says—'That when Phrynichus and Æschylus first turned the subject of tragedy to fables and doleful stories, the people said, What's this to Bacchus?'—According to this anecdote how could Thespis, who was anterior to Phrynichus and Æschylus, be a writer of such tragedies, as Suidas has ascribed to him.

Another very ingenious argument for their confutation is drawn from a short fragment, which the same author has quoted from the Pentheus, one of those tragedies which Suidas gives to Thespis: this fragment purports that—'The Deity is situated remote from all pleasure or pain:' A passage of this cast can never have been part of a ludicrous drama belonging to Bacchus and the Satyrs, and therefore either Plutarch must be mistaken in his anecdote

above cited, or Suidas in his author of 'The Pentheus;' but it is further urged by a sagacious critic, that this fragment bears internal evidence of a forgery, being doctrine of a later date than Thespis, and plainly of the fabrication of Plato's academy: in confirmation of this remark, circumstances of a more positive nature are adduced, and Diogenes Laertius is brought forward, who actually charges Heraclides of writing certain tragedies and fathering them upon Thespis, and this charge Laertius grounds upon the authority of Aristoxenus the musician: the credit of Aristoxenus as a philosopher, historian, and faithful relator of facts, is as well established with the learned world, as the character of Heraclides is notorious for plagiarism, falsehood and affectation; he was a vain rich man, a great juggler in literature, aspiring to rival Plato in his writings, and one who was detected in bribing the Pythia to decree a crown of gold and divine honours to him after his decease; a man as apt to palm his own productions upon others as he was to assume other men's productions to himself, which he was convicted of by Chamæleon in his spurious treatise upon Homer and Hesiod.

This practice of fathering tragedies upon great names obtained in more instances than one; for Dionysius wrote a tragedy called Parthenopæus and palmed it upon Sophocles, a bolder forgery than this of Heraclides; and it is remarkable, that Heraclides himself was caught by this forgery, and quotes the Parthenopæus as genuine.

Plato speaking of The Deity uses these words—*Πορρω ἡδονῆς καὶ λύπης ἵδρυται τὸ θεῖον*—'The Deity is situated remote from all pleasure and pain:' A sentiment so coincident with the fragment quoted by Plutarch from the Pentheus ascribed to Thespis,

seems to warrant the remark before made, which supposes it to have been fabricated in the academy of Plato: This with the authority of Aristoxenus for the general forgery, and Plutarch's assertion that tragedy was satiric before Phrynichus and Æschylus, will have its weight against the titles of Thespis's tragedies, as they are given in Suidas; and accordingly I find that the editor of Suidas, commenting upon this very article, in effect admits the error of his author: this argument moreover accounts for the silence of Aristotle as to Thespis's tragedies.

I am aware that it has been a question with some critics, whether tragedy originated with Thespis, notwithstanding the record of the Marmor Chronicon, and Suidas states the pretensions of Epigenes the Sicyonian prior to Thespis; but in this he is single and unsupported by any evidence, except what Plato asserts generally in his Minos—'That tragedy was extremely antient at Athens, and that it is to be dated neither from Thespis, nor from Phrynichus;'—Some authorities also place Thespis's first tragedy in a higher period then Olymp. lxi, as it stands in the Marmor; for Laertius says—'That Solon hindered Thespis from acting his tragedies, believing those feigned representations to be of no use.'—And Plutarch tells us—'That Solon saw one of Thespis's plays, but disliking the manner of it, forbade him to act any more.'—I need not observe that this must have passed before Pisistratus established his tyranny, which did not take place till the last year of Olymp. liv. but if these facts be admitted, they seem to be decisive as to the tragedy's being allusive to Bacchus and the Satyrs in its first instance at least; because it can hardly be supposed that so profest an admirer of Homer as

Solon was known to be, and himself a poet, would have objected to any drama formed upon his model.

As to Plato's general assertion with respect to the high antiquity of the Athenian tragedy, it seems thrown out as a paradox, which he does not attempt to illustrate or support, and I cannot think it stands in the way of Thespis's pretensions to be considered as the father of tragedy, confirmed by so many authorities.

All these seeming difficulties will be reconciled, if we concur with the best opinions in the following particulars, viz. that tragedy, which was concerned about Bacchus and the Satyrs, was in no instance committed to writing: that Thespis's first tragedy, which Solon saw and disliked, was of this unwritten and satyric sort: that in process of time the same author actually wrote tragedy, and first acted it on a waggon in Olymp. lxi. within the æra of Pisistratus, and according to the record of the Marmor Chronicon, so often referred to.

I will not disguise that Dr. Bentley, whose criticism is so conclusive for the forgery of those tragedies quoted by Plutarch and enumerated by Suidas, Julius Pollux and Clemens of Alexandria, is of opinion 'Thespis himself published nothing in writing;' but as there are so many testimonies for his being the father of tragedy in general, and some which expressly say he was the first *writer* of tragedy, I hope I shall not trespass too far on my reader's patience, if I lay the chief of these authorities before him.

The Arundel Marble, which is of date as high as Olymp. cxxix. sets forth, that 'Thespis was the first who gave being to tragedy.' The epigram of Dioscorides, printed in Mr. Stanley's edition of Æschy-

lus, gives the invention to Thespis. In the Anthologia there are two epigrams, which expressly say the same; one begins—Θέσπιδος ἴνδεμα τῦτο—the other—Θέσπις ὅδε, τραγικὴν ος ἀνέπλασε πρῶτος ἀοιδήν. Plutarch in his Solon says—'That Thespis gave rise and beginning to the very rudiments of tragedy.' Clemens of Alexandria makes Thespis the contriver of tragedy, as Susarion was of comedy. Athenæus says both comedy and tragedy were struck out at Icarius, a place in Attica, where Thespis was born. Suidas records to the same effect, and Donatus speaks expressly to the point of written tragedy.'—*Thespis autem primas* hæc scripta *in omnium notitiâ protulit.*—What Horace says of Thespis in his Art of Poetry, and more particularly in the Epistle to Augustus, where he classes him with Æschylus and Sophocles, certainly implies that he was a *writer* of tragedy, and is so interpreted by Cruquius and the old commentator preserved in his edition. I shall add one circumstance to the above authorities, which is, that the Chorus alone performed the whole drama, till Thespis introduced one actor to their relief; this reform could hardly be made, much less be recorded by Aristotle, unless Thespis had *written* tragedies and published them to the world.

Upon the whole I incline to consider Thespis as the first author of the written tragedy, and to place him in Olymp. lxi. From him tragedy descended through Pratinas, Carcinus and Phrynichus to Æschylus, and this is the first age of the tragic drama.

NUMBER CXXVII.

ABOUT two centuries had elapsed from the date of Thespis's tragedy to the time when Aristotle wrote his Poetics; which must have been after he quitted the service of Alexander, to whom he sent a copy of that treatise: the chain of dramatists from Thespis to Euripides had been continued in regular succession, and it is not to be supposed, but that he might have given a more particular and methodical account of the first inventors of tragedy, if it had fallen within the scope of his work; but this being merely critical, he takes his account of tragedy and comedy from Æschylus and Epicharmus, contenting himself with a brief detail of such vague and dubious traditions relative to the first inventors, as common fame seems to have thrown in his way.

He loosely observes—'That the people of Megaris claim the invention of comedy; that there is reason to think it took its origin in a popular and free form of government, which that of Megaris then was: that Epicharmus the Sicilian was far senior to Chionides and Magnes, the first Athenian writers of comedy:'—He also throws out an idle suggestion from the etymology of the words *comedy* and *drama*, the former of which he derives from Κώμαι, villages, and the latter from the verb Δρᾶν, ὅτι μιμοῦνται Δρῶντες.—Now the people of Peloponnesus he tells us use the words Κώμαι and Δρᾶν in their dialect, whereas the Athenians express them-

selves by those of Δῆμοι and Πρᾶξιν, and upon this rests the Peloponnesians' pretensions to be considered as the inventors of the drama: he then refers to what he considers as the true source and foundation of the drama, the works of Homer: and throwing aside all others, as tales not worth relating, proceeds to the execution of his plan, viz. The definition and elucidation of the tragic poem.

These suggestions were thrown out by Aristotle for no other purpose, as it should seem, but to cast a ridicule upon every other account of the discovery of the drama, but his own; for he might as well have given the invention of comedy to the Megarensians for their being notorious laughers; Γέλως Μεγαρικός 'to laugh like a Megarensian' being a phrase in vulgar use with the Athenians; nay indeed he might have gone a step further, and given them tragedy also, for *Megarensian tears* were as proverbial as *Megarensian laughter*; but a true Athenian would have answered, that the former alluded only to the onions, which their country abounded in, and was applied in ridicule of those who counterfeited sorrow: in short the Megarensians seem to have been the butts and buffoons of the Athenians, and held in sovereign contempt by them. As for the Peloponnesian etymologies, Aristotle must have known that neither the one nor the other had the least foundation; and that there is not a comedy of Aristophanes, in which he does not use the verb Δρᾶν frequently and in the mouths of Athenian speakers; in his *Birds* I find it within a few lines of the verb Πρᾶττειν, and used by one and the same speaker; I have no doubt the like is true of Κώμας, but I did not think the search worth following.

Bacchus and the Satyrs were both source and subject of the first drama, and the jocund rites of

that deity were celebrated at all times and under all governments with the same unrestrained festivity: this celebration was too closely interwoven with popular superstition to be checked by the most jealous of tyrants; the privileged seasons of Bacchus were out of the reach of the magistrate; nor was the old satyrical masque of the Athenians in Pisistratus's time less licentious than that of the Megarensians in their freest state; though it soon happened that the republic of Megara became an oligarchy, and the monarchy of Athens was converted into a republic.

The manner in which the drama was struck out may naturally be accounted for. The Greeks from early time were in the habit of chanting songs and extemporary verses in the villages in praise of Bacchus at the *Trina Dyonisia*, which times answer to March, April, and January; afterwards they performed these songs or dithyrambs at the Panathenæa, which were celebrated in the month of August. The Athenians were of all people living the most addicted to raillery and invective; these village-songs and festivities of Bacchus gave a scope to the wildest extravagancies of mummery and grimace, mixt with coarse but keen raillery from the labourers and peasants concerned in the vintage: the women from their carts, masked and disguised with lees of wine, and men accoutred in rude grotesque habits like satyrs, and crowned with garlands of ivy and violets, vented such prompt and irregular sallies, as their inebriated fancies furnished on the instant, or else rehearsed such little traditional and local ballads in Iambic metre, as were in fashion at the time; accompanying them with extravagant gesticulations and dances incidental to the subject, and suitable to the character of the deity they were celebrating.

The drunken festivities of the antient Danes, when they sacrificed to their rural deities—*Annuæ ut ipsis contingeret felicitas, frugumque et annonæ uberrimus proventus*—and the Highland ceremonies and libations of the *Bel-tein* are of this character.

The Athenian calendar was crowded with these feasts: drinking-matches were rewarded with prizes and even crowns of gold; their Phallic ceremonies were of this description: they used vehement gesticulations in reading and speaking; their rhapsodists carried this habit to excess, and in the dithyrambic hymn every outrageous gesture, which enthusiasm inspires, was put in practice: the dithyramb was conceived in a metaphorical inflated style, stuffed with an obscure jargon of sounding phrases, and performed in honour of Bacchus.

In these dithyrambic verses and Phallic songs we have the foundation of tragedy and comedy; the solemn and swelling tone of the first, and the petulant vivacity of the latter, appositely point to the respective character of each. The satire and scurrility they indulged from their vintage waggons, their masks and disguises in the hairy habits of satyrs, their wanton songs and dances at the Phallic ceremonies, and the dark bombast of the dithyramb, chanted by the rhapsodists with every tumid and extravagant action, all together form a compleat outline of the first drama: as soon as dialogue and repartee were added, it became to all intents a masque, and in this state it is discovered in very early times throughout the villages of Greece. When it had reached this period, and got something like the shape of a drama, it attracted the curiosity of the villagers, who in reward for their amusement in the spectacle decreed a prize to the performance agreeable to the object in view and the means of the spec-

tators; this prize consisted of a cask of wine, and the performance before named simply *Comœdia* or the *village-song*, was thenceforward called *Trugœdia*, or the *song for the cask*, compounded of τρύγα and ᾠδή.

These names are decriptive of the drama in its progressive stages from a simple *village-song*, till it took a more complicated form by introducing the Satyrs, and employing the chorus in recitation through a whole fable, which had a kind of plot or construction, though certainly not committed to writing. In this stage, and not before, the prize of *the cask of wine* was given, and thence it proceeded to attract not the husbandmen and labourers only but the neighbours of better degree. The drama under the designation of *Trugœdia* was satyric, and wholly occupied in the praise of Bacchus; it was unwritten, jocose, and confined to the villages at the seasons of the *Trina Dionysia*; but after a prize however inconsiderable had been given, that prize created emulation, and emulation stimulated genius.

The village bards now attempted to enlarge their walk, and not confining their spectacles merely to Bacchus and the Satyrs began to give their drama a serious cast, diverting it from ludicrous and lascivious subjects to grave and doleful stories, in celebration of illustrious characters amongst their departed heroes; which were recited throughout by a chorus, without the intervention of any other characters than those of the Satyrs, with the dances proper thereunto.

This spur to emulation having brought the drama a step forward, that advance produced fresh encouragement, and a new prize was now given, which still was, in conformity to the rustic simplicity of

the poem and its audience, a *Goat*, τράγος, a new prize created a new name, and the serious drama became distinguished by the name of *Tragœdia*, or *the song for the goat*: thus it appears that *Tragedy*, properly so called, was posterior in its origin to comedy; and it is worthy of remark that *Trugœdia* was never applied to the tragic drama, nor *Tragœdia* to the comic: after this comedy lost its general designation of *Trugœdia*, and was called by its original name of *the village-song* or *Comœdia*.

The next step was a very material one in point of advance, for the village-poets having been excited by emulation to bring their exhibitions into some shape and consistence, meditated an excursion from the villages into the cities, and particularly into Athens: Accordingly in Olymp. liv. *Susarion*, a native of Icarius, presented himself and his comedy at that capital, rehearsing it on a moveable stage or scaffold, presuming on the hope that what had given such delight to the villagers would afford some amusement to the more refined spectators in Athens: this was the first drama there exhibited, and we should naturally expect that a composition to be acted before the citizens of the capital should be committed to writing, if we did not know that the author was on these occasions the actor of his own piece; the rude interludes of Bacchus and the Satyrs being introduced upon the scene according to their old extemporary manner by the *Sileni* and *Tityri*, whose songs and dances were episodical to the drama: it continued to be the custom for authors to act their own plays in the times of Phrynichus and Æschylus, and I therefore think it probable Susarion's comedy was not a *written* drama; and I close with the authorities for Epicharmus being the first *writer* of comedy, who, being retained in an elegant

court at Syracuse, chusing his plots from the *Margites*, and rejecting the mummeries of the Satyrs, would naturally compose his drama upon a more regular and elaborate plan.

NUMBER CXXVIII.

In the plan, which I have laid down for treating of the literature of the Greeks, and to which I have devoted part of these papers, I have thought it adviseable for the sake of perspicuity to preface the account with an abstract of the Athenian history, within those separate periods which I mean to review. In conformity to this plan I have already brought down my narration to the death of Pisistratus, and this has been followed with a state of the drama at that period: I now propose to proceed with the history to the battle of Marathon inclusive, beyond which I shall have no occasion to follow it, and shall then resume my account of the literature of the Greeks, which will comprehend all the dramatic authors, both tragic and comic, to the death of Menander.

At the decease of Pisistratus the government of Athens devolved quietly upon Hipparchus, who associated his brother Hippias with him in power. Pisistratus had two other sons by a second wife, who were named Jophon and Thessalus; the elder died in his father's life-time, and the other, who was of a turbulent and unruly spirit, did not long survive him.

Hipparchus was not less devoted to science and the liberal arts than his father had been: the famous Phæa, who had personated Minerva, shared his throne, and though he communicated with his brother Hippias on matters of government, and imparted to him so great a portion of authority, that they were jointly styled Tyrants of Athens, yet it seems evident that the supreme power was actually vested in Hipparchus; and it is extraordinary, for the space of fourteen years, until his death, his government was undisturbed by any disagreement with his brother or complaint from his subjects.

The most virtuous citizens of Athens, in the freest hours of their republic, look back upon this reign as the most enviable period in their history. Plato himself asserts, that all the fabulous felicity of the golden reign of Saturn was realized under this of Hipparchus: Thucydides gives the same testimony, and says that his government was administered without envy or reproach: the tradition of the golden days of Hipparchus was delivered down through many generations, and became proverbial with the Athenians. A prince, who had deserved so well of letters, was not likely to be forgotten by poets, historians, or philosophers; but such was the public tranquillity under his administration, that the patriots and declaimers for freedom in the most popular times have not scrupled to acknowledge and applaud it.

Hipparchus not only augmented the collection of books in the public library, but engaged several eminent authors to reside at Athens: he took Simonides of Ceos into his pay at a very high stipend, and sent a fifty-oared galley for Anacreon to Teos, inviting him with many princely gifts to live at his court: he caused the poems of Homer to be pub-

licly recited at the great assembly of the Panathenæa, and is generally supposed to have suggested the plan of collecting the scattered rhapsodies of the Iliad and Odyssey, so happily executed by his father. His private hours he devoted to the society of men of letters, and on these occasions was accompanied by Simonides the lyric poet, Onomacritus, Anacreon and others. He did not confine his attention to the capital of his empire, but took a method, well adapted to the times he lived in, of reforming the understandings of his more distant and less enlightened subjects in the villages, by erecting in conspicuous parts of their streets or market-places statues of the god Mercury, placed upon terms or pedestals, on which he caused to be inscribed some brief sentence or maxim, such as—'Know thyself—Love justice—Be faithful to thy friend'—and others of the like general utility.

It is not easy to devise a project better calculated for the edification of an ignorant people than these short but comprehensive sentences, so easy to be retained in the memory, and which, being recommended both by royal and divine authority, claimed universal attention and respect.

This excellent and most amiable prince was assassinated by Harmodius and Aristogiton, and a revolution being in the end effected favourable to the popular government of Athens, the assassins were celebrated to all posterity as the assertors of liberty and the deliverers of their country. Of all the rulers of mankind, who have fallen by the hand of violence, how few have been sacrificed in the public spirit of justice, and how many have fallen by the private stab of revenge! When we contemplate the elder Brutus brandishing the dagger of Lucretia, we cannot help recollecting that Tarquinius Superbus

had murdered his brother. Hipparchus is said to have put an affront upon Harmodius's sister by dismissing her from a religious procession, in which she was walking at the festival of the Panathenæa: Harmodius was the handsomest youth in Attica, and the prince is by the same account charged with having conceived an unnatural passion for him, in which he was repulsed. If this account were to be credited in the whole, it would be an incident of so unmanly a sort on the part of Hipparchus, as to leave an everlasting mark of disgrace upon a character otherwise meritorious.

The general prevalence of a turpitude, which neither the religion nor the laws of Greece actually prohibited, may induce our belief of the charge against Hipparchus, as far as concerns Harmodius; but the supposed insult to the sister is irreconcileable to his character. It were far more natural to suppose his resentment should have been pointed against Aristogiton, who was the favorite of Harmodius: such circumstances as we have now related would have carried their own confutation upon the face of them, even though historians had not greatly varied in their accounts of the transaction; but when so respectable an author as Plato gives the narrative a turn entirely opposite to the above, whilst modern historians have only retailed vulgar errors without examining testimonies of better credit, I hope I may be allowed the equitable office of summing up the evidences in this mysterious transaction, for the purpose of rescuing a most amiable character from misrepresentation.

Plato in his Hipparchus says—'That the current account above given was not the account believed and adopted by people of the best condition and repute; that the insult vulgarly supposed to have been

put upon the sister of Harmodius by Hipparchus was ridiculous and incredible upon the face of it; that Harmodius was the disciple of Aristogiton, a man of ordinary rank and condition; that there was a mutual affection between the pupil and his master; that they had admitted into their society a young Athenian of distinction, whose name had escaped his memory, of whom they were very fond, and whom they had by their conversation and instructions impressed with high ideas of their talents and erudition; that this young Athenian having found access to the person of Hipparchus, attached himself to his society, and began to fall off from his respect for his former preceptors, and even treated their inferiority of understanding with contempt and ridicule; that thereupon they conceived such hatred and resentment against the prince for this preference shewn by their pupil for his company, and for the method he had taken of mortifying their vanity, that they determined upon dispatching Hipparchus by assassination, which they accordingly effected.'

Justin gives a different account and says—'That the affront was put upon the sister of Harmodius, not by Hipparchus but by his brother Diocles; that Harmodius with his friend Aristogiton entered into a conspiracy for cutting off all the reigning family at once, and pitched upon the festival of the Panathenæa as a convenient time for the execution of their plot, the citizens being then allowed to wear arms; that the complete execution of their design was frustrated by one of their party being observed in earnest discourse with Hippias, which occasioned them to suspect a discovery, and so precipitated their attack before they were ready; that in this attack however they chanced upon Hipparchus, and put him to death.'

There are other accounts still differing from these, but they have no colour of probability, and only prove an uncertainty in the general story.

Plutarch relates—'That Venus appeared to Hipparchus before his assassination in a dream, and from a phial, which she held in her hand, sprinkled his face with drops of blood.' Herodotus also says—'That he was warned by a vision on the eve of his murder, being addressed in sleep by a man of extraordinary stature and beauty, in verses of an enigmatical import, which he had thoughts of consulting the interpreters upon next morning, but afterwards passed it off with contempt as a vapour of the imagination, and fell a sacrifice to his incredulity.'

This at least is certain, that he governed the capricious inhabitants of Attica with such perfect temper and discretion, that their tranquillity was without interruption; nor does it appear that the people, who were erecting statues and trophies to his murderers, in commemoration of the glorious re-establishment of their freedom, could charge him with one single act of oppression; and perhaps if Hippias, who survived him, had not galled them with the yoke of his tyranny during the few years he ruled in Athens after the death of Hipparchus, the public would not have joined in styling those assassins the deliverers of their country, who were known to be guided by no other motives than private malice and resentment.

Harmodius was killed on the spot; Aristogiton fled and was seized in his flight. The part, which Hippias had now to act, was delicate in the extreme; he was either to punish with such rigour, as might secure his authority by terror, or endear himself to the people by the virtue of forbearance: he had the experience of a long administration, conducted by his brother on the mildest and most mer-

ciful principles; and if these assassins had been without accomplices, it is reasonable to suppose he would not have reversed a system of government, which had been found so successful; but as it appeared that Harmodius and Aristogiton were joined by others in their plot, he thought the Athenians were no longer to be ruled by gentle means, and that no other alternative remained, but to resign his power, or enforce it with rigour.

NUMBER CXXIX.

Hippias began his measures by putting Aristogiton to the torture; he seized the person of Leæna a courtezan, who was in the secret of the conspiracy, but whilst he was attempting to force her to a confession, she took the resolute method of preventing it by biting off her tongue. Aristogiton, with revengeful cunning, impeached several courtiers and intimates of the tyrant. Athens now became a scene of blood; executions were multiplied, and many principal citizens suffered death, till the informer, having satiated his vengeance upon all who were obnoxious to him or friendly to Hippias, at length told the tyrant that he had been made the dupe of false accusations, and triumphed in the remorse that his confession occasioned: some accounts add that he desired to whisper to Hippias, and in the act suddenly seized his ear with his teeth, and tore it from his head.

Hippias henceforward became a tyrant in the worst sense of the word; he racked the people with

taxes, ordered all the current coin into the royal coffers upon pretence of its debasement, and for the period of three years continued to oppress the state by many grievous methods of exaction and misrule. His expulsion and escape at length set Athens free, and then it was that the Athenians began to celebrate the action of Harmodius and Aristogiton with rapture and applause; from this period they were regarded as the saviours of their country; a public edict was put forth, directing that no slave, or person of servile condition, should in future bear the names of these illustrious citizens; assignments were made upon the Prytaneum for the maintenance of their descendants, and order was given to the magistrate styled Polemarchus to superintend the issue of the public bounty; their posterity were to rank in all public spectacles and processions as the first members of the state, and it was delivered in charge to the superintendants of the Panathenæa, that Harmodius and Aristogiton should be celebrated in the recitations chaunted on that solemnity. There was a popular ode or song composed for this occasion, which was constantly performed on that festival, and is supposed to have been written by Callistratus: it grew so great a favourite with the Athenians, that it became a general fashion to sing it at their private entertainments; some fragments of the comic poets are found to allude to it, and some passages in the plays of Aristophanes. It is a relic of so curious a sort, that, contrary to the practice I shall usually observe, I shall here insert it in the original with a translation.

Φίλτατ' Ἀρμόδιε, οὔπω τέθνηκας·
Νήσοις δ' ἐν μακάρων σέφασιν εἶναι,
Ἴνα περ ποδώκης Ἀχιλλέυς
Τυδείδην τέ φασι τὸν ἐσθλὸν Διομήδεα·

Ἐν μύρτου κλαδὶ τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,
Ὥσπερ Ἁρμόδιος καὶ Ἀριστογείτων,
Ὅτ' Ἀθηναίης ἐν θυσίαις
Ἄνδρα τύραννον Ἱππάρχον ἐκταινέτην.

Ἀεὶ σφῶν κλέος ἔσσεται κατ' αἶαν
Φίλλαδ' Ἁρμόδιε καὶ Ἀριστογείτων,
Ὅτι τὸν τύραννον κταινέτην,
Ἰσονόμους τ' Ἀθήνας ἐποησάτην.

He is not dead, our best belov'd
Harmodius is not lost,
But with Troy's conquerors remov'd
To some more happy coast.

Bind then the myrtle's mystic bough,
And wave your swords around,
For so they struck the tyrant low,
And so their swords were bound.

Perpetual objects of our love
The patriot pair shall be,
Who in Minerva's sacred grove
Struck and set Athens free.

The four last lines of this ode are quoted by Athenæus, and I also find amongst the adulatory verses made in commemoration of these illustrious tyrannicides, a distich written by Simonides of Ceos, congratulating with the Athenians on their delivery from the tyranny of Hipparchus: this poet is made famous to posterity for his memory, which was almost miraculous; it is to be lamented that it should fail to remind him of such a patron and benefactor. The lines are not worth translating; the author and the subject reflect no honour upon each other.

The first statues, which the Athenian artists ever cast in metal, were the brazen statues erected in

honour of Harmodius and Aristogiton, in the first year of Olymp. lxviii. thirteen years after the murder of Hipparchus, when Isagoras was archon, and in the memorable æra of Rome, when Tarquinius Superbus was dethroned and expelled: they were conspicuously placed in the forum of Athens, and it was a curious event, after the revolution of five centuries, that the statue of the younger Brutus, when he had killed Cæsar, was placed between these very statues, erected in the year when his ancestor expelled the Tarquins: they were the workmanship of Antenor; and Xerxes, when he plundered Athens, removed them out of Greece, from other motives probably than of respect to their intrinsic merit: they were in succeeding time restored to the city, but whether by Alexander after his defeat of Darius, by Antiochus, or by the munificence of Seleucus, authorities are not agreed; I am inclined to think they were given back by Seleucus. There were two others of the same materials afterwards cast by Critias, and again two others, the workmanship of the celebrated Praxiteles. Pliny says these last-mentioned statues were of consummate beauty and excellence, and there is reason to think they were the first performances of that great master in metal. The honour of a statue in brass was rarely decreed by the Athenians to any of their most illustrious citizens, and few other instances occur, except one to Solon, and one to Conon for his services against the Lacedæmonians. The expedient made use of to perpetuate the heroic constancy of Leæna was ingenious, for as it was not fitting to erect a public statue to a courtezan, they devised the figure of a lioness in allusion to her name, which they cast in brass, and without a tongue, in memory of the resolute method she had

taken to prevent confession: this figure was placed in the porch of the citadel, where it kept its station for many generations.

Pisistratus and his sons maintained their usurpation during a period of sixty-eight years, including those of Pisistratus's secessions from Athens: had Hippias shared the fate of his brother, their annals would have been unstained by any other act of violence or injustice, except that of reviving a regal authority, which by gradual revolutions had been finally abolished. The measures of Hippias during the time he reigned alone, which scarce exceeded three years, blasted the merits of his predecessors, and embittered the minds of the Athenians against his family to the latest posterity.

Clisthenes and Isagoras, two rich and leading citizens, finding themselves unsafe under his government, left Athens and took shelter amongst the Phocians. They were in fact no less ambitious than himself, turbulent partisans, and though they proved the instruments of extricating their country from his tyranny, they were no more actuated by a pure love of liberty, as a general principle, than Harmodius and his accomplice were, when they assassinated Hipparchus.

The state of Lacedæmon both in point of resource and of its alliances, was at this time in condition to assume a leading share in the affairs of Greece, and it was the first object of Clisthenes and Isagoras to engage the Lacedæmonians in their party for the emancipation of Athens; to carry this point with a people, so jealous of the Athenian greatness, required some engine of persuasion more powerful than philanthropy or the dictates of common justice; the Temple of Delphi opened a resource to them, and by a seasonable bribe to the

Pythia they engaged her to give such responses to her Lacedæmonian clients on all occasions, as should work upon their superstition to accord to their wishes.

The plot succeeded, and an expedition was set on foot for the expulsion of Hippias, sanctified by the authority of Apollo, but it miscarried; the effort was repeated, and when things were in that doubtful posture as seemed to menace a second disappointment, chance produced the unexpected success. Hippias and his adherents, foreseeing that the capital would be invested, sent their women and children to a place of better security, and the whole party fell into the hands of the enemy. Such hostages brought on a treaty, and the parent consented to renounce his power for the redemption of his children; Hippias upon this retired from Athens to the court of his kinsman Hegesistratus, in the city of Sigeum, in the Troade on the Asiatic coast.

NUMBER CXXX.

Clisthenes and Isagoras had now effected a complete revolution in favour of liberty, but being men of ambitious spirit and of equal pretensions, the state was soon thrown into fresh convulsion by their factions. Clisthenes made his court to the people, Isagaras again had recourse to the Lacedæmonians.

Lacedæmon, always disposed to controul the growing consequence of her neighbours, and sensible of the bad policy of her late measures, had opened her eyes to the folly of expelling Hippias upon the forged responses of the Pythia, of whose corruption and false dealing she had now the proofs: she complied with the requisitions of Isagoras so far as related to her interference at large, but in the mode of that interference she by no means met his wishes, for it was immediately resolved to invite Hippias into Sparta, where he was publicly acknowledged and received, and a herald sent to Athens with a haughty message to Clisthenes and his party. The Athenians, intimidated and divided, threw themselves upon new and desperate resources, sending an embassy, or rather petition, to the Persian satrap Artaphernes, brother of the reigning king Darius, and governor of Lydia.

The Persian had not at this time ever heard the name of Athens, and peremptorily demanded homage; the ambassadors yielded to the demand, but the state revoked it at their return with indignation; for the Corinthians had in the mean time taken measures very favourable to their interests, by separating from the Lacedæmonian alliance, and protesting strongly against the proposal of restoring Hippias; their opposition seems to have been founded in principle, having lately experienced a tyranny of the same sort in their own persons, and they carried their point by compelling Hippias to return in despair to Sigeum, from whence he betook himself to Lampsacus, where he began to cabal in the court of Æantides the tyrant, who was in great favour with the Persian monarch. By this channel Hippias introduced himself to Darius, and with all the inveteracy of an exiled sovereign, not abated

by age or length of absence, became a principal instrument for promoting his expedition into Greece, which concluded in the memorable battle of Marathon, at which he was present, twenty years after his expulsion.

It was fortunate for the liberties of Athens, that when she sent her embassy to Artaphernes, he required as an indispensable condition of his aid that Hippias should be re-established in his tyranny. A more dangerous step could not have been resolved upon than this of inviting the assistance of the Persian, and in this applauded æra of liberty it is curious to remark such an instance of debasement, as this embassy into Lydia: the memory however of past oppression was yet too fresh and poignant to suffer the Athenians to submit to the condition required, and nothing remained but to prepare themselves to face the resentment of this mighty power: with this view they gave a favourable reception to Aristogaras the Milesian, who was canvassing the several states of Greece to send supplies to the Ionians, then on the point of falling under the dominion of Persia: Lacedæmon had refused to listen to him, and peremptorily dismissed him out of their territory: From Athens he obtained the succours he solicited, in twenty gallies well manned and appointed: the Athenian forces, after some successful operations, suffered a defeat by sea, and the breach with Persia became incurable. Before the storm broke immediately upon Athens, the Persian armies were employed against the frontier colonies and islands of Greece with uninterrupted success: they defeated the Phœnician fleet and reduced Cyprus; many cities on the Hellespontic coast were added to their empire; in the confines of the Troade several places were taken; impressions were made upon

Ionia and Æolia by the forces of Artamenes and Otanes, and in further process of the war the rich and beautiful city of Miletus was besieged and taken, and the inhabitants of both sexes removed into the Persian territories, and colonized upon new lands: the isles of Chios, Lesbos, and Tenedos shared the same fate, and not a city in Ionia, that had been involved in the defection, but was subjected in its turn: in the Hellespont and Propontis every thing on the European shore was reduced, together with the important station of Chalcedon; the like success followed their arms in the Thracian Chersonesus. These operations were succeeded by the next year's campaign under the conduct of Mardonius, the son of a sister of Darius, a young and inexperienced general; and the check, which the power of Persia received this year by the wreck and dispersion of their fleet off the coast of Macedonia, under Mount Athos, in the Singitic bay, afforded the first seasonable respite from the ill fortune of the war.

At length the formidable torrent, which had so long threatened Athens at a distance, seemed ready to burst upon her, and surely a more unequal contest never occupied the attention of mankind. Mardonius, who had been so unsuccessful in his first campaign, was now superseded, and the vast army of Persia was put under the joint command of Datis a Mede, and the younger Artaphernes, nephew to king Darius and son to the Prefect of Lydia. These commanders pursued a different route by sea from what Mardonius had taken, avoiding the unlucky coast of Macedonia, and falling upon Eubœa in the neighbourhood of Attica by a strait course through the Ægean sea. Having reduced the city of Carystus, they laid siege to Eretria the capital

of Eubœa; the Athenians had reinforced the garrison with four thousand troops; but although the Eretrians for a time stood resolutely to the defence of their city, it was given up by treachery on the seventh day, and pillaged and destroyed in a most barbarous manner, the very temples being involved in the common ruin and conflagration.

Having struck this stroke of terror under the very eye of Athens, the Persians embarked their troops, and passing them over the narrow channel, which separates Attica from Eubœa, landed for the first time on Athenian ground, and encamped their vast army upon the sandy plain of Marathon.

Hippias, who had been now twenty years in exile, and in whose aged bosom the fires of ambition were not yet extinguished, accompanied the Persian forces into his native country, and according to the most probable accounts was slain in action. If any death can be glorious in a guilty cause, this of Hippias may be so accounted; to have brought three hundred thousand men in arms, after a career of victory, landed them on the Athenian territory, and there to have put the very existence of his country to the issue of a combat, was an astonishing effort both of mind and body, at a period of life which human nature rarely attains to. Ten thousand Greeks under the command of Miltiades discomfited this overgrown host in a pitched battle upon an open plain, where all the Persian numbers could act; but it has often happened that a small band of disciplined warriors have worsted an irregular multitude, how great soever. The army of Darius was broken and repulsed; six thousand were left on the field, and the fugitives returned into Asia overwhelmed with shame and disappointment.

This memorable day established the liberty and

the glory of Athens, and from this we are to look forward to the most illuminated age in the annals of mankind. Though Hippias had several children, who survived him, yet as his descendants never gave any further disturbance to the liberties and constitution of Athens, we are henceforward to consider the race of Pisistratus as historically extinct.

The friend of freedom, who reviews them as tyrants, will dismiss them with reproach; we, who have regarded them only as patrons of literature, may take leave of them with a sigh.

NUMBER CXXXI.

Graiis ingenium; Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Musa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaris.

HORAT.

The advances which the drama had made within the period now reviewed, were considerable; for the tragic poets Pratinas, Chærilus, Phrynichus and Æschylus were in possession of the stage, whilst Epicharmus and Phormis in Sicily, Chionides, Dinolochus, Evetes, Euxenides, Mylus and others in Attica, were writing comedy. Bacchus and his Satyrs were expelled, and a new species of composition, built upon short fables selected from the poems of Homer, succeeded to the village masque, and numbers of ingenious competitors began to apply themselves to the work.

Thespis had been acting tragedies, but Thespis

was one of those early dramatists, who come under the description of Οι περι Διονυσον, writers about Bacchus.

Pratinas succeeded Thespis, and wrote fifty tragedies, if they may be so called, when two and thirty of the number were satyric, or allusive to the Satyrs. He was a Peloponnesian of the celebrated city of Phlius, but resorted to Athens for the purpose of representing his dramas: he entered the lists with Chærilus and Æschylus about the time of Olymp. lxx. some years antecedent to the battle of Marathon: he bore away the prize from his competitors with one composition only; on all other occasions he saw the palm decreed to the superior merit or better interest of his rivals.

Plays were still exhibited upon scaffolds or in booths, where the spectators as well as the performers were placed, till upon the representation of one of Pratinas's tragedies, the scaffolding broke down under the weight of the crowd, and much mischief ensued upon the accident: from this time the Athenians set about building a theatre in proper form and of more solid materials, and the drama, like the edifice, assumed a more dignified character and a better construction.

Pratinas struck out a considerable improvement in the orchestral part of his drama, by revoking the custom of allowing the minstrels to join in the chaunt or strain with the chorus, and suffering them only to accompany with their pipes: the recitative was by this alteration given more distinctly to the audience, and the clamorous confusion of voices avoided: the people however, not yet weaned from their old prejudice for the noisy bacchanalian songs of their village masques, opposed themselves violently against this refined innovation, and the

whole theatre was thrown into confusion, when in the midst of the tumult Pratinas appeared on the stage in person, and in a kind of Salian song, accompanied with dancing, addressed his audience to the following effect.

PRATINAS.

What means this tumult? Why this rage?
What thunder shakes th' Athenian stage?
'Tis frantic Bromius bids me sing,
He tunes the pipe, he smites the string;
The Dryads with their chief accord,
Submit and hail the drama's lord.
Be still! and let distraction cease,
Nor thus prophane the Muse's peace;
By sacred fiat I preside
The minstrel's master and his guide;
He, whilst the chorus strains proceed,
Shall follow with responsive reed;
To measur'd notes whilst they advance,
He in wild maze shall lead the dance:
So generals in the front appear,
Whilst music echoes from the rear.
Now silence each discordant sound!
For see, with ivy chaplet crown'd,
Bacchus appears! He speaks in me——
Hear, and obey the god's decree!

Ex ATHENÆO.

Phrynichus, the tragic poet, was the son of Melanthus and the disciple of Thespis: Suidas thinks there was another of the name, son of Chorocles, who also wrote tragedies, but there is reason to think he is in an error. This Phrynichus first introduced the measure of tetrametres; this he did because the trochaic foot is most proper for dancing, and the drama of this age was accompanied with dances characteristic and explanatory of the fable.

There were masters professedly for the purpose of composing and teaching these dances, and in some instances the author performed in person; hence it was that the early dramatists were called Ὀρχηστικοὶ, or Dancers. When tragedy was in a more improved state, and the business was no longer conducted by dance and spectacle, but committed to dialogue, they changed the tetrametres to iambics, which Aristotle observes were fit for declamation rather than singing with the accompaniment of the dance.

This author was the first who produced the female mask upon the scene; he took upon himself the task of instructing the dancers, and performed in person; accordingly we find him burlesqued by Aristophanes in his last scene of 'The Wasps,' on account of his extravagant gesticulations—'He strikes and flutters,' says the old humourist Philocleon, 'like a cock; he capers into the air, and kicks up his heels to the stars:' Whilst Philocleon is capering on the stage after this fashion, the son, who is on the scene, observes—'This is not agility, it is insanity. It is either the plot of a tragedy,' replies the servant, 'or the caprice of a madman; give him hellebore; the man's beside himself.'

Dancing was so essential a part of the first scenic spectacle, and the people were so attached to their old bacchanalian customs, that the early reformers of the tragic drama found it no easy task to make the dance accord to the subject of the scene and weave it into the fable. This was generally understood to be done under the direction of the poet, and in many cases he was principal performer in person; but where an author was not competent to this part of his duty, he called in the assistance

of a professed ballet-master, who formed dances upon the incidents of the drama, and instructed the chorus how to perform them. There is a very eminent professor of this art upon record, named Telestes, who had the honour of a statue decreed to him, which was conspicuously placed within the theatre, whilst those of the most celebrated poets were not admitted to a nearer approach than the steps or portico. These dances prevailed till after the time of Æschylus, when they were finally laughed out of fashion by the parody of the satyrical comedy.

Though the fate of Phrynichus's tragedy on the 'Siege of Miletus' has been frequently mentioned, I cannot here omit the story. This beautiful city had been lately sacked by the Persian troops: it was the capital and pride of Ionia, a very antient colony of the Athenians, settled by Neleus, son of Codrus, the last and most beloved of their kings: Of its riches and renown Strabo tells us the account would exceed belief; it had given birth to men illustrious for science and for military fame; Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes in succession had been natives of Miletus; Hecatæus the historian was born there, as were his contemporaries Histiæus and Aristogaras, celebrated men, who took so great a lead in the affairs of the Ionians introductory to the invasion of the Persians, and to whose conspicuous talents even Darius himself, when exulting at their death, gave the honourable tribute of his applause.

Such was the city, upon whose deplorable fate Phrynichus founded his tragedy; the spectacle dissolved his audience into tears; the national and affecting scene operated on the sensibility of the Athenians in so serious a manner, that the magistracy thought it a case fit for their interference, and

by public edict prohibited the author in future to touch upon that melancholy subject: nor was this all, they put a heavy fine upon the poet. His judgment certainly wanted correction; but it should have been the correction of an indiscretion rather than of a crime: as the tragedy, like its subject, is long since perished, we cannot properly decide upon the severity of the edict; it must be owned the event was too recent and domestic; the idea of such a city in flames, the destruction of its temples and the massacre of its inhabitants, many of whom perhaps had friends and relations present at the spectacle, was not to be supported. It is not the province of the drama to attack the human heart with such realities; the whole region of invention is open to its choice, free to work its moral purposes by pity or by terror; but if a plot is to be constructed upon truth, the tragic history is to be taken from time far distant, or from scenes out of the spectator's knowledge. *Flectere non frangere* is the poet's motto; if he terrifies, let him not rend the heart; if he softens, let him not seduce it: the man, who is melted with pity, becomes as a child, but he is the child of his poet, and has a claim upon him for the protection of a parent.

This author exhibited a famous tragedy, entitled Pyrrhicistæ, or 'The Dance of armed soldiers:' the Athenians were charmed with the martial manner in which he conducted this spectacle, and Ælian says they made him their general, and put him at the head of their army for his skill and address in the performance: if it were so, it would seem to have been the fate of Phrynichus to be punished without mercy, and rewarded without merit; but the anecdote does not obtain with good critics, and it

is clear that the poet lived in a more early period than Phrynicus the general, for the lowest date we have of him, whom we are speaking of, is the circumstance given by Plutarch in his Themistocles, viz. That in Olymp. lxxv. 4. Phrynichus bore away the prize with his tragedy (probably The Phænissæ) in compliment to Themistocles, who was at the charge of the representation, and who in commemoration thereof set up the following inscription—'Themistocles of the parish of Phreari was at the charge; Phrynichus made the tragedy, and Adimantus was archon.'

From this play of The Phænissæ Æschylus took the design of the famous tragedy of The Persæ.

NUMBER CXXXII.

Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor honestæ
Æschylus et modicis instravit pulpita tignis;
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

HORAT.

We are now to speak of a poet, some of whose inestimable remains are in our hands. Æschylus was born in the last year of Olymp. lxiii. the son of Euphorion an Athenian; he was in the flower of manhood at the battle of Marathon, and served with distinguished reputation; his three brothers, Aminias, Euphorion and Cynægirus, were in the same action, and signalized themselves on that glorious day. In the sea-fight off Salamis Aminias lost an arm, and bore away the first prize for valour in that well-fought action; it so happened at the representation

of one of Æschylus's plays, that the people rose against him on account of some attack he had made upon their superstitions, and were proceeding to stone him to death, when this Aminias, putting aside his mantle, exhibited his amputated arm, and turned their fury aside from the devoted poet; an anecdote, which at once demonstrates their ferocity and their magnanimity.

Æschylus, though he had just reason to value himself highly on his poetical talents, yet, like Alcæus and Archilocus, continued through life to hold his military character more at heart than his literary one, and directed to be engraved on his tomb-stone a distich in long and short verse, in which he appeals 'to the field of Marathon and the long-haired Mede' to witness to his valour; by the Mede he probably means the general Datis. The personal gallantry for which Æschylus and his brethren were so conspicuous, gives a strong and manly colouring to his compositions; it is the characteristic of his genius; and his pen, like his sword, is a weapon of terror: the spectacle, which his drama exhibits, is that of one sublime, simple scene of awful magnificence; his sentiment and style are in unison with his subject, and though he is charged with having written his tragedies in a state of inebriety, to which he was in general addicted, still they do not betray the traces of a confused imagination, as Sophocles insinuated, though occasionally they may of an inflated one; and it was a weakness in Sophocles (to give his motive no worse a name) to pronounce of Æschylus, 'that he did not know what he did, although he did things well;' as if he had written in a state of absolute intoxication and mental disability; an imputation which convicts itself.

Æschylus's excess was the vice of his time and

nation, I might add of his profession also as a soldier; and one should almost suspect that he considered it as a becoming quality in a hero, seeing that he had the hardiness to exhibit Jason drunk upon the scene, an attempt which stands recorded as the first of the sort, though afterwards he was followed in it by Epicharmus and Crates, comic poets, and in latter times even by the sententious Euripides himself: in short, the literary annals of Greece are deeply stained with this excess, and the stage at one period was far from discouraging it.

Æschylus not only instructed his chorus in the dances incidental to the piece, but superintended also and arranged the dresses of the performers with the most correct precision, and this he did in a taste so dignified and characteristic, that the priests and sacrificing ministers of the temple did not scruple to copy and adopt his fashions in their habiliments: he did not indeed perform on the stage as Phrynichus did, but he never permitted the intervention of a master, as many others did: the dances, which he composed for his tragedy of The Seven Chiefs, were particularly apposite to the scene, and were performed with extraordinary success and applause: he brought fifty furies at once on the stage in the chorus of his Eumenides, and displayed them with such accompaniments and force of effect, that the whole theatre was petrified with horror, pregnant women miscarried on the spot, and the magistracy interposed for the prevention of such spectacles in future, and limited the number of the dancers, annexing a penalty to the breach of the restriction. Aristophanes has an allusion to the Eumenides of Æschylus in his comedy of the Plutus, (Act ii. Scene 4.) where Chremylus and Blepsidemus being on the scene are suddenly accosted by *Poverty* in the

person of a squalid old woman, and whilst they are questioning who she may be, Blepsidemus cries out—

'Some fury from the scenes of Æschylus,
Some stage Erinnys; look! her very face
Is tragedy itself.'

CHREM.

'But where's her firebrand?

BLEPS.

'Oh! there's a penalty for that.'

That the poet Æschylus was of a candid mind appears from his well-known declaration, viz. 'That his tragedies were but scraps from the magnificent repasts of Homer;' that he was of a lofty mind is from nothing more evident, than from his celebrated appeal upon a certain occasion, when the prize was voted to his competitor evidently against justice—'I appeal to posterity, says Æschylus, to posterity I consecrate my works, in the assurance that they will meet that reward from time, which the partiality of my contemporaries refuses to bestow.'

Though the candour of Æschylus called his tragedies fragments or scraps from Homer, and seemed to think it sufficient honour to be able to wield with tolerable grace one weapon out of the armoury of this gigantic spirit, yet I would submit to the reader's judgment, whether the tragic poem does not demand a stronger exertion of the mental faculties, within the compass of its composition, than the epic poem. In a drama, where every thing must be in action, where characters must be strongly marked and closely compressed, the passions all in arms, and the heart alternately seized by terror and subdued by pity, where the diction must never sleep

in detail, nor languish in description, but be lofty yet not dilated, eloquent but not loquacious, I have no conception how the human genius can be strained to greater energy: at the same time it must be admitted, that the continuation of exertion, which the epic requires, inferior though it may be in force, falls heaviest on the poet of that department; the scope of his work is much more diffused, and history perhaps presents so few fit subjects to his choice, that we cannot wonder at the general predilection of the literary world for dramatic composition; least of all can we want a reason why the Greeks, an animated and ingenious race of writers, addicted to spectacle and devoted to music and dancing, should fall with such avidity upon the flowery province of the drama.

But when they made it a contest as well as a study, when they hung up wreaths and crowns as the reward of victory, and turned dramatic spectacles into a kind of Olympic games, they brought a crowd of competitors to the lists. The magistrate generally, and private citizens in particular cases, furnished the exhibition at an immense expence, and with a degree of splendor we have little conception of. The happy poet, crowned with the wreath of triumph, presenting himself to the acclamations of a crowded theatre, felt such a flood of triumph, as in some instances to sink under the ecstacy and expire on the spot; whilst on the other hand disappointment operating upon susceptible and sanguine minds, has been more than once productive of effects as fatal: such minds, though they claim our pity, do not merit our respect, and it is a consolation to reflect, that where there is a genius like that of Æschylus, there is generally found a concomitant magnanimity, which can disregard, with conscious

dignity, the false misjudging decrees of the vulgar.

The appeal which Æschylus made to posterity, was soon verified, for after his death the Athenians held his name in the highest veneration, and made a decree for furnishing the expence of representing his tragedies out of the public purse; he carried away many prizes during his life, and many more were decreed to his tragedies after his death: a statue was erected in memory of him at Athens, and a picture was painted descriptive of his valour in the fight at Marathon.

Amongst other reasons suggested for his leaving Athens, some assert that he retired in disgust at being superseded in a prize by Sophocles, who was a very young competitor; but a vague assertion of this invidious sort is readily confuted by the character of Æschylus, to which it is not reconcileable upon any other than the strongest authority. It is agreed that he removed to Sicily to the court of king Hiero, where he was very honourably received, and after three years residence died and was buried in a sumptuous and public manner: the fable of the eagle dropping a tortoise on his head, and his being killed by the blow, was probably allegorical, and emblematical of his genius, age and decay. Valerius Maximus however gives the story for truth, and refers to the authorities of Aristophanes, Pliny, and Suidas, concluding his account with the following expression—*Eoque ictu origo et principium fortioris tragœdiæ extinctum est.* He died at the age of sixty-nine years, after a life spent alternately in great labour and great excess. This event took place in the first year of Olymp. lxxxi. In Olymp. lxx. when he was between twenty and thirty years old, he contested the prize with Pratinas and Chærilus,

when Myrus was archon; Chærilus was an Athenian, and wrote tragedies to the amount of one hundred and fifty, of all which not even a fragment survives. At the battle of Marathon Æschylus was thirty-seven years old; twelve years after this celebrated action Xerxes passed into Greece at the head of his armies, burnt Athens, and carried off the library collected by Pisistratus and his sons. When Æschylus was turned of fifty he carried away the prizes with his tragedies of Phineus, The Persæ, Glaucus Potniensis, and The Prometheus. Three years before his death he performed his Agamemnon, and bore away the prize with that, with The Choephoris, The Eumenides and The Proteus, a satyric drama, the charges of the theatre being defrayed by Xenocles Aphidneus. If he passed into Sicily, therefore, he must have left Athens immediately after this success, and this is another circumstance which makes against the story of his disgust.

At the death of Æschylus, Sophocles was in his twenty-seventh year, and Euripides in his twenty-first: Chionides and Dinolochus, writers of the old comedy, flourished in his time; as did the philosophers Zeno Eleates, Anaxagoras and Parmenides: Socrates was in his twenty-second year when Æschylus died, and Pindar died two years before him.

NUMBER CXXXIII.

In the Frogs of Aristophanes three entire acts are occupied by a contest between Æschylus and Euripides for the tragic chair amongst the departed spirits. The matter is put to reference before Bacchus and others, who proceed to a solemn hearing of the parties. The author evidently leans to Æschylus throughout the controversy, and in the end makes Bacchus give a full decision in his favour: the irascible proud spirit of Æschylus and the litigious talkative character of Euripides are well marked, and in a peculiar vein of comic humour: the contending poets alternately repeat passages in their respective prologues and chorusses, which the other party as constantly criticizes and turns to ridicule: amongst the many defects which Euripides pretends to discover in Æschylus's dramas, he urges the taciturnity of his principal character.

EURIPIDES.

'First then, he'd muffle up his characters,
Some Niobe, for instance, or Achilles,
And bring them on the stage, their faces hid,
As mutes; for not a single word they utter'd.

BACCHUS.

'Not they, by Jupiter!

EURIPIDES.

'——Meantime the chorus
Sang regularly four successive strains;
But they kept silence.

BACCHUS.

'And that silence truly
Pleas'd me as much as all our modern speeches.
———But tell me to what purpose
This fellow did it?

EURIPIDES.

'From impertinence,
To keep the audience during the performance
Waiting to hear when Niobe should speak.
———Having play'd these tricks,
Just as the piece was above half concluded,
They'd speak perhaps some dozen bellowing words,
Of such high-crested and terrific form,
The audience truly could not comprehend them.'

DUNSTER'S Translation.

The decree which Aristophanes makes Bacchus pronounce in favour of Æschylus, is by implication as decisive against Sophocles as against Euripides, for Sophocles declares his acquiescence under the judgment, if it shall be given for Æschylus, but if otherwise he avows himself ready to contest the palm with Euripides: a circumstance which sufficiently discriminates the modest complacency of his character, from the peevish disputatious temper of Euripides: it is at the same time an implied confirmation of the pre-eminence of these three tragic poets over all other competitors in that department of the drama, and puts Æschylus at the head of the triumvirate. How they ranked in the judgment of Aristophanes is further manifest by what he puts in the mouth of Æschylus after judgment is given for him: he says to Pluto—

'Do thou to Sophocles
Consign my seat, to keep possession of it,
In case I should again return; for he
Doubtless comes nearest me in tragic powers.'

DUNSTER.

It appears therefore, that although we have few remains of the Greek tragedy, yet they are remains of the best masters. There are authorities which say that Æschylus wrote above one hundred tragedies, and the titles of all these have been collected and published by Meursius; seven only survive; the like number of Sophocles and a few more of Euripides comprize all the remains of the Greek tragedy now in our possession: but although these are highly valuable as being specimens of the best masters, it does not follow that they are the best, or amongst the best, performances of their respective authors: at all events we can judge but in part from so small a proportion, and as these authors were in the habit of forming their dramas upon plots that were a continuation of the same story, it must be to the disadvantage of any one piece, that happens to come down to us disjunctively, as in the instance of the Prometheus of Æschylus, and more which might be named amongst the remains of the two other surviving poets.

We have now English translations of all the Greek tragedies, and without carrying my remarks any farther than appertains to the poet of whom I am speaking, I should feel it as an injustice to the merit of a very able and ingenious contemporary, if I could mention Æschylus and overlook his translator: a work so arduous as that which Mr. Potter has executed, might claim much more indulgence than his performance will ever stand in need of; but these translations, could they be executed up to the full spirit of their originals, can never interest an English reader like his native drama: to the poet they afford a great subject for display in odes and chorusses, and relieve him at the same time from the heaviest part of his work, the labour of the plot;

but with the reader, who cannot judge of their orchestral accompaniments, they will never stand in competition with the activity of the English drama, its warm and rapid incident, transition of scene, variety of character, brevity of dialogue, busy plot and domestic fable. A man of genius, who writes for the closet, may have a curiosity to build a drama upon Greek construction, but he will hardly succeed in an attempt to naturalize it on our stage.

No translator can engage with a more difficult original than Æschylus: time has thrown some sublimities out of our sight, and many difficulties in our way by the injuries of the text: the style of his tragedy bespeaks a fiery and inflated imagination; the time in which he wrote, and his own martial habits, doubtless give a colour and character to his diction; perhaps the intemperance in which he indulged may sometimes give a heat to his fancy more than natural, and there are some passages of so figurative and metaphorical a sort, that I have been often tempted to suppose, that his campaigns against the Persians might have tinctured his language with something of the Oriental tone of expression.

Sophocles, in times more pacific, has a softer versification, and a style more sweet and feeble; of habits and education more effeminate, of a fair and comely person, we hear of him dancing naked round a trophy, erected for the victory of Salamis, his lyre in his hand, and his limbs anointed with oil to encrease their activity: he studied music and the dance under Lampsus, and in both arts was an adept; he danced at the performance of his own Nausicaa, and he accompanied the chorusses of his Thamyris with his voice and harp: devoted to the fair sex in the extreme, the softness of his natural character is conspicuous in his writings: his pictures of women

are flatteringly drawn, and his style is compared to the honey of the bee for sweetness: the sensibility of his mind was extreme; though he lived near an hundred years, old age did not deaden his feelings, for whilst judgment was passing on his Oedipus Coloneus, the last play he exhibited, his spirit was so agitated by the anxious suspense, that when the prize was at length decreed in his favour, the tumult of passion was too violent for his exhausted frame, and the aged poet expired with joy.

Euripides, on the other hand, was of mean birth, the son of a poor woman who sold herbs, at which circumstance Æschylus points when he says in the Frogs—

O thou from rural goddess sprung!

He was educated by his father to engage as an athletic in the Eleusynian and Thesean games; he was also a student in natural philosophy under Anaxagoras, in rhetoric under Prodicus, and a pupil of Socrates in moral philosophy. When he began to study tragedy he shut himself in a cave, wild and horrid and sequestered from the world, in the island of Salamis: he is charged with having a profest antipathy to women, and every feature both of nature and education, as now described, is discoverable in his writings; his sentiments breathe the air of the schools, his images are frequently vulgar, and his female characters of an unfavourable cast; he is carping, sour and disputatious, and, though he carried away only five prizes out of seventy-five plays, he is still indignant, proud and self-assuming; his life was full of contention and his death of horror, for he was set upon by mastiffs and killed. He was the friend of Socrates, and grossly addicted to unnatural passion.

NUMBER CXXXIV.

In a scene between Xanthias the slave of Bacchus, and Æacus, in the comedy of the Frogs before mentioned, the latter, upon being asked why Sophocles did not put in his claim for the tragic chair, replies——

> Not he, by Jove!
> When hither he came down, he instantly
> Embrac'd Æschylus, shook him by the hand,
> And in his favour gave up all pretensions:
> And now, as by Clidemides I'm told,
> He will attend the trial as third man,
> Content if Æschylus victorious prove;
> But otherwise, has said he'll try his skill
> In contest with Euripides.
>
> DUNSTER'S Translation.

The tragedies of Æschylus have all the marks of an original genius; his scene is cast with an awful and majestic grandeur, and he designs in the boldest style; in some situations his principal figures are painted with such terrible effect, that I can only liken them to a composition, where Spagnolet had drawn the persons of the damned in tortures, and Salvator Rosa had filled up the scenery of Hell in his strongest manner. No poet introduces his character on the scene with more dignity and stage-effect: he is in the practice of holding the spectator in suspense by a preparatory silence in his chief person, which is amongst the most refined arts of the dramatic poet: this was well understood by our

Shakspeare and some others of the old school; on the French stage I conceive it is very little in use.

In the introductory scene of the Prometheus, the principal character preserves a dignified silence for a considerable space of time, during which all the tremendous machinery incidental to his tortures, is going forward under the superintendance of imaginary beings, and the vengeance of almighty Jupiter in chaining him to a rock, there to languish for innumerable ages, is in actual execution. This is a prelude infinitely more dramatic, sublime and affecting, than if the scene had been interwoven with lamentations, cries and complaints, though ever so well expressed; the picture tells its own tale, and the spectacle speaks to the heart without the vehicle of words: it is well observed by Mr. Potter, the translator of Æschylus, that 'there is a dignity and even sublimity in this silence of Prometheus beyond the expression of words; but as soon as the instruments of tyranny have left him, he bursts into a strain of pathetic lamentation, and invokes all nature to attest to his undeserved sufferings.'

> Æthereal air, and ye swift-winged winds,
> Ye rivers springing from fresh founts, ye waves,
> That o'er th' interminable ocean wreath
> Your crisped smiles, thou all-producing earth,
> And thee, bright sun, I call, whose flaming orb
> Views the wide world beneath.———
>
> POTTER.

The scenery and spectacle of the Prometheus must have been the finest that poet ever devised; all the characters are supernatural beings, and their language is not unworthy of Olympus.

The Agamemnon is a wonderful production, and though no other tragedy but this had come down to us from the pen of the author, it would be matter of

astonishment to me that any critic should be found of such proof against its beauties, as to lower its author to a comparison with Sophocles or Euripides; yet some there have been, who have reversed the decree of Bacchus, and given their preference to Sophocles, nay even to Euripides. The same management is observable in this tragedy upon the introduction of Cassandra, as we have just now remarked in the case of Prometheus: Agamemnon recommends his captive to the protection of Clytemnestra; they are left upon the scene together; the Queen of Argos solicits her to descend from her car and enter the palace; the chorus second the invitation; she makes no reply; Clytemnestra doubts if she speaks the language of Greece, and calls upon her to make some acknowledgment by signs; when this draws nothing from her, she grows exasperated and exclaims—

'Tis frenzy this, the impulse of a mind
Disorder'd; from a city lately taken
She comes, and knows not how to bear the curb,
Till she has spent her rage in bloody foam:
But I no more waste words to be disdain'd.

POTTER.

Cassandra still is silent; when upon the departure of the queen, this gloomy cloud that hung upon the foreground of the prospect at once disperses, and a scene of such dazzling splendour and sublimity bursts forth upon the instant, as must have thrown the theatre into astonishment; seized with the prophetic fury, she breaks out into such gusts and agonies of divination, as can no otherwise be described, but with silent wonder how any human imagination could furnish such ideas, or find words to give them utterance. The chorus I confess stand the shock with wonderful presence of mind, but the

phlegm and apathy of a Greek chorus is proof against every thing; though the prophetess plainly denounces the impending murder of the king by Clytemnestra, and points out the bath as the scene of his assassination, the chorus tamely answers—

> To unfold the obscure oracles of heav'n
> Is not my boast.——
>
> POTTER.

I need not be reminded that incredulity was annexed by Apollo to the predictions of Cassandra, and that the plot and catastrophe would not admit of precipitation; for I must still contend that incredulity itself is a good dramatic engine, and if the chorus had not stood in his way, would have been otherwise managed by the author; but I take the character of a true Greek chorus to be such, that if Apollo himself had come in person to tell them, that the earth would open and swallow them up, if they did not instantly remove from the spot on which they stood, they would have stopt to moralize, or hymn an ode, in strophe and antistrophe, to Jupiter or Venus, or the gods below to whom they were descending, though the ground was cleaving under their feet—provided, as I before premised, that they had the true spirit of a Greek chorus in them. To have a genius like this of Æschylus encumbered with a chorus, is as if a millstone was tied round the pinions of an eagle.

The Agamemnon was the last tragedy he wrote for the Athenian stage; the poet was then turned of sixty years: the Athenians decreed the prize to him for this inestimable performance, which has been the admiration of all ages, and will be to all posterity.

The tragedy of the Persians, and that also of the

Furies, are a study for poets and painters; the imagery in both these pieces is of a wonderful and surpassing sublimity. In the former of these every reader must be struck with the introduction of the ghost of Darius, and the awful rites and incantations that are preparatory to its appearance: the sudden interruption of the unfinished hymn by the royal spectre, the attitude of the prostrate Satraps, the situation of Atossa, and the whole disposition of the scene, are a combination in point of effect which no dramatic spectacle ever exceeded.

In the Furies the scene presents to the spectator the temple of the Pythian Apollo; the priestess opens the tragedy with a speech from the vestibule; the gates are drawn back and the interior of the fane is discovered, the god appears on the scene in person, Orestes is at his feet in a supplicating posture, and the furies to the number of fifty are dispersed in different attitudes, but all buried in profound sleep: Apollo addresses himself to his suppliant, and points to the sleeping furies—

——See this grisly troop!
Sleep has oppress'd them, and their baffled rage
Shall fail, grim-visag'd hags, grown old
In loath'd virginity: nor god nor man
Approach'd their bed, nor savage of the wilds;
For they were born for mischiefs, and their haunts
In dreary darkness, 'midst the yawning gulfs
Of Tartarus beneath, by men abhorr'd
And by th' Olympian gods.

POTTER.

Can there be a finer, a more tremendous picture? There can: but it is the genius of Æschylus must heighten it: the ghost of Clytemnestra rises on the scene and completes the horror; stained with the blood of her husband, and gashed with wounds in-

flicted by the parricidal hand of her own son, she calls out to the avenging deities—

> What, can you sleep? Is this a time t' indulge
> Your indolent repose?——
> Hear me, oh hear! 'tis for my soul's repose
> I plead: rouse your keen sense, infernal powers!
> 'Tis Clytemnestra calls you in your dreams.
>
> POTTER.

The furies scream out in their sleep, the spectre again urges them to rouse—

> ——And is this all? Awake,
> Arise.——
>
> ——With fiery breath
> That snuffs the scent of blood, pursue this son,
> Follow him, blast him!
>
> POTTER.

What art! what aggravation in this horrid prelude! what preparation for effect! with what a burst must they have sprung from their dream!—Well may we give credit to the account of the terrors which they imprest upon the spectators: their numbers, their attire, their temples wreathed with snakes, and their hands armed with flames, the clangor of the orchestra, the violence of their motions, their yelling screams, seem to empty the whole infernal regions on the stage. We must take into our recollection also, that this spectacle was exhibited to a people, who considered these beings as deities, at whose shrines they paid divine worship, and to whose eyes and imaginations this snaky attire was wholly new; for it was the bold fancy of the poet, which first dressed them in this manner, and they have kept the fashion from that moment to the present.

I cannot dismiss this tragedy without observing that there is a shift of the scene from Delphi to

Athens, which I take to be a single instance of the sort on the Greek stage.

The number of the chorus being limited by public edict after the exhibition of this tragedy, it is clear that the tragedy of the Supplicants must have been subsequent to it, inasmuch as the chorus of Danaides consisted of fifty persons; and as the whole tenor of this soft and pathetic drama bears an air of atonement to the superstition of the vulgar, and is full of pious submission to the will of Jupiter and religious veneration for the gods, it seems to me very probable that the poet had a view in this tragedy of the Supplicants, of reconciling the people [illegible] the offence he had given them on a former oc- [illegible] making too free with the deities, and for [illegible] narrowly es[illegible] heir resentment.

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I SHALL now proceed to lay before the public, such an account as I have been enabled to collect of the several Greek writers of comedy.

The learned reader needs not to be informed, how little is to be found in Aristotle's Poetics on the subject of comedy; that treatise by no means answers to the general profession of its title; if it had come down to us as perfect and entire, as it probably was when the author put the last hand to it, and presented a correct copy of his work to Alexander, we might conclude otherwise of it: but to speak of it as it is, we can call it nothing more than a dissertation upon tragedy, in which many things are evidently out of place and order, some no doubt lost, and others mutilated: it is thus considered by the learned commentator Daniel Heinsius, who in his supplementary treatise annexed to his edition, professedly speaks only of the construction of tragedy, and endeavours with great diligence and perspicuity to methodize the whole work, and dispose his author's system into some order and regularity.

With the exception of a few obvious remarks upon the epic, as tending to illustrate the drama, and two or three passages where comedy is spoken of only as contrasted with tragedy, the whole of this celebrated dissertation is nothing more than a set of rules for the drama, which are mere transcripts from the compositions of the great writers of the Homeric tragedy, Æschylus, Sophocles, and

Euripides: he analyzes and defines a poem, then actually carried to its perfection; but gives no new lights, no leading instructions, for the furtherance and improvement of what had not arrived to the like state of maturity.

With the remains of the three tragic poets above mentioned in our hands, I profess I do not see how we are edified by Aristotle's dissertation, which offers nothing but what occurs upon the reading of their dramas; unless posterity had seen fit to abide by the same laws which they observed, and the modern tragedy had been made exactly to conform to the Greek model.

Aristotle, as we have before remarked, speaks of no comedy antecedent to the comedy of Epicharmus: there is reason to think that this author did not fall in with the personal comedy, in the licentious manner it prevailed upon the Athenian stage, even to the time of Aristotle; for it was not reformed there, till the personal satirists were awed into better respect by the Macedonian princes, who succeeded to Alexander; whereas Epicharmus wrote for the court of an absolute prince.

Now it is remarkable, that Aristotle makes no strictures upon the licentiousness of the Athenian comedy, nor offers any rules for the correction of the stage, though the schools proscribed it, and the tribunals were at open hostility with it. It is plain he states things as they were, not as they ought to have been; for he pronounces of comedy—'that it is a picture of human nature, worse and more deformed than the original.'

I cannot hold this to be a just character of comedy, as it stood at the time when Aristotle pronounced it: the only entire comedies we have to refer to, are a contradiction to the assertion; for no

one will contend that the corrupt and abominable manners of the times in which Aristophanes wrote, did not fully warrant the severity of his satire, or that his characters of depravity are in general overcharged, 'and his pictures of human nature more deformed than their originals.' As for the rest of the comic fraternity, their fragments only can plead for them; but they are fragments of such a nature, as prove them to have been moralists of the sublimest sort, and they have been collected, translated, and applauded, by the gravest and most sententious of the Christian writers for many ages. I will venture to say, that in these scattered reliques of the comic stage, more useful knowledge and good sense, better maxims for right conduct in life, and a more generous display of benevolence, justice, public spirit, and all the moral virtues of natural religion are to be found, than in all the writings of the philosophers, which are so much more entire.

Socrates, it is true, could hardly be prevailed upon to enter the comic theatre, but I infer very little against the poets on that account; Plato, I am aware, though an intimate of Aristophanes, banished the drama out of his visionary republic; but what is that more than to say, that if all men were virtuous there would be no need of satirists? The comic poets in return lashed the philosophers over the stage, and they had what they merited, the public applause on their side; the schools and academies of sophists furnished an inexhaustible fund for wholesome ridicule; their contradictory first principles, their dæmons and clouds, and water and fire, with all their idle systems and hypotheses, their fabulous conceits, dreams and devices to catch the vulgar, and the affected rigour of their manners, whilst in secret they were addicted to the grossest debauchery and impu-

rity, were continual subjects of satire; and if hypocrisy is not the comic poet's lawful game, what is? There is not a play of Aristophanes to be named, in which these sanctified sinners have not their share in the ridicule; and amongst the fragments above mentioned, a very large proportion falls to their lot.

Aristotle, who had very little feeling for Plato and his academy, or indeed for practical philosophy in general (which he seems to have professed only in opposition to Xenocrates) concerned himself no further about the state of the stage, than to comment and remark upon the tragedies of the three chief writers above mentioned; and it is humiliating enough to the pride of criticism to observe, that tragedy, after all his pains to hold it up to the standard of Sophocles and Euripides, sunk with those authors, and was no more heard of; whilst comedy, without his help, and in defiance of his neglect, rose in credit with the world, till it attained perfection under the auspices of Menander.

I have spoken of tragedy as a *written poem* before comedy of the same description, because I think that Susarion did not *write* comedy, though he acted it so early as the fiftieth Olympiad; and I also think that Thespis did *write* tragedy in the sixty-first Olympiad, if not sooner; in other words, although the complexion of the original drama was comic in the most extravagant degree, yet it appears probable that tragedy had the start in point of publication. The nature of the first comedy, compared with that of the first tragedy, seems to warrant this opinion; for it is easy to suppose that the raillery and satire of the village masques, which would pass off at a lawless festival, spoken off-hand and without the malice of premeditation, would not so readily have been committed to writing by the poet, as

the tragic drama; which being composed in honour of deceased heroes, or on religious and grave subjects, not only called for greater deliberation on the part of the author, but would also be made public without danger or offence.

It now remains to inquire into the chronology of the *written* comedy.

I have already observed, that Aristotle ascribes the first written comedy to Epicharmus.

Both Aristotle and Horace call him a Sicilian, but in what particular place he was born is not agreed; some contend that he was a Syracusan, some that he was a native of Crastum, others of Megara in Sicily: Diomedes the grammarian says he was born in Cos, and derives the word comedy from the name of that island, a derivation that sets aside his authority altogether. The father of Epicharmus was named Chimarus, or according to others Tityrus, and his mother Sicida. Cicero in his Tusculans calls him, *acutum nec insulsum hominem:* Demetrius Phaleræus celebrates him for the elegant and apposite choice of his epithets, on which account the Greeks gave the name of *Epicharmion* to his style, making it proverbial for its beauty and purity. It is difficult to fix the precise time when he began to write comedy, especially as he lived to the great age of ninety-seven: it is certain however he was still writing in the reign of Hiero, in or about Olymp. LXXIV. at which time Phormis also wrote comedy in Sicily; and Chionides, Dinolochus and Magnes, comic poets, flourished at Athens.

Suidas's chronology does agree with Aristotle's, for he makes Chionides antecedent to Epicharmus, and calls him the first writer of comedy; adding, that Evetes, Euxenides and Mylus, all Athenians, were his contemporaries; he allows, however, that

Epicharmus and Phormis were the first writers in the island of Sicily; but this is in the vague manner of his dates, and not to be relied upon: he takes no notice of Aristotle's express assertion, that Epicharmus was long senior to Chionides; and yet he might have recollected, that facts are so far in favour of Aristotle's chronology of these poets, that there is a title upon record of one of Chionides's plays called *The Persians*, which must have been posterior to the Persian æra, when it is on all hands agreed that Epicharmus was living.

Amongst the epigrams of Theocritus, published by Henry Stevens in 1579, there are some lines upon Epicharmus, which appear to have been inscribed upon the pedestal of a statue of brass, which the Syracusans had set up in his honour as their fellow-citizen: it consists of ten lines in the Doric dialect, which he used; it settles the point of his birth, expressly saying he was a Syracusan, and ascribes to him the invention of Comedy—

—χὠ 'πηρ, ὁ τὰν Κωμωδίαν
Εὑρὼν Ἐπίχαρμος.

'Epicharmus, the man who invented Comedy.'

In the conclusion, it celebrates him for the many useful maxims which he gave for the instruction of youth; but this I am disposed to think may apply to the circumstance of his having been a schoolmaster at Syracuse; for if we are to take our judgment of Epicharmus's drama from his imitator Plautus, perhaps its morality, though not to be overlooked amongst other excellencies, is nevertheless not the most striking feature in its character. And though it is probable that Epicharmus did not launch out into that personality, which the freer Athenians in-

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dulged to such excess, yet I can suppose him to have been not very chaste in his dialogue, from the anecdote which Plutarch gives us, of his being heavily fined and compelled to manual labour by order of Hiero for certain obscene jests, which he suffered to pass in hearing of his queen: I must ground another remark upon this anecdote, respecting the time in which he is generally thought to have struck out his comedy, as being long antecedent to the time of Hiero; which being admitted, it will follow that he was near the close of his life, when this sentence of manual labour was executed upon him; a kind of punishment so very unlikely to be inflicted on a man of ninety-six years by a prince of Hiero's magnanimity and benevolence, that if I am to take the anecdote for granted, I cannot assent to those authorities that have placed him so high in time, for the purpose only of putting his title of first founder of comedy out of dispute.

Upon the whole, I think it likely the Athenians wrote comedy as soon as the Sicilians, but that Epicharmus was the first who formed his drama upon the poems of Homer: it is also clear, that his countryman and contemporary Phormis wrote comedy as soon, or nearly as soon as he did; for although Theocritus, in the epigram above cited, says expressly that Epicharmus struck out comedy, yet it must be remarked that Theocritus was a Syracusan by birth, living in the time of Ptolemy Lagus; and in giving this testimony for his fellow-citizen, it is more than probable he spoke locally of the Sicilian comedy only, as Suidas did in after times, when he said that Epicharmus and Phormis first struck out comedy in Sicily.

I would therefore fix Epicharmus's first comedy antecedent to Olymp. LXXV. at the lowest date,

because we have it from good authority that he was teaching scholars at Syracuse four years before the Persian æra; and this date is confirmed by the age of Phormis, who certainly flourished in the time of Gelon, and was in great favour in the court of that prince, who was predecessor to Hiero, and was succeeded by him in Olymp. LXXVII.

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EPICHARMUS was a liberal benefactor to the stage. Porphyry says that Apollodorus the grammarian made a collection of his plays in ten volumes; Suidas reckons fifty-two; Lycon only thirty-five; but modern philologists have given the titles of forty, with the authorities by which they are ascertained.

It is not my purpose in these papers to make a practice of loading the page with lists of titles, which may too truly be called dead names; but in the instance of an author like Epicharmus, who stands at the head of his department, every relique seems an object of some curiosity; and therefore, although the following catalogue may strike the dramatic reader as what may properly enough be called 'a beggarly account of empty boxes,' yet I shall proceed to enumerate the titles of forty comedies, all of which are, upon good grounds of criticism, ascribed to this celebrated author.

TITLES OF THE COMEDIES OF EPICHARMUS.

The Husbandman. The Halcyon. Amycus, Son of Neptune. The Banditti. Atalanta. The

Bacchæ. Busiris. Earth and Sea. The Fathers of the People. The Bacchanalians. Diphilus. Hope. The Festival. The Celebration of the Victory. Hebe's Wedding. Juno's Nuptials. Vulcan, or The Revels. The Ambassadors to the Oracle. The Cyclops. The Reasoner. The Megarensian. The Muses. The Islands. Niobe's Wedding. Ulysses the Deserter. Ulysses Shipwreckt. The Chitterlings. The Pædagogues. The Paragon. The Persians. The Statesman. Prometheus, the Fire-stealer. Pyrrha, the Wife of Deucalion. The Sirens. The Isle of Scyros. The Sphynx. The Trojans. Philoctetes. The Chorus Troop. The Potters.

The same respect, which led me to insert these titles, led me also to search with all possible diligence for every fragment which I could find of Epicharmus. I wish they had been more in number, and of greater importance than they are; but such as they are, I have reason to believe they are the whole amount of what can be picked up from the wreck of this once valuable poet. The reader must not expect, that either in this author's instance, or that of any other Greek comedian, except in very few cases, that the particular play can be ascertained, to which the fragments belong; for the grammarians and others, who quote them, only give the name of the author, and not that of the comedy from which they extract them. I must in this place once for all give vent to an anxiety, which presses on my mind respecting these fragments of the Greek comedy, whether the insertion of them will or will not be approved of by the generality of my readers: my sole object is to furnish them with rational and moral amusement, and if I fail of that object in these

my hearty endeavours, I have taken a great deal of pains to render these passages into English in the best manner my capacity enabled me to do, to a very unfortunate purpose indeed. The learned reader will bear me witness, that these fragments have been the admiration of all ages; and I am sensible that very many of them possess intrinsic beauty both of style and sentiment; and if my translations have not robbed them of their original merit, some pleasure, and let me hope some profit, may attend their perusal. I have studied so to class them, as not to burthen or distract the reader with a mere succession of miscellaneous quotations without any reference or connection, which I am sensible could not be an agreeable mode of publication, though Stobæus, Hertelius and some others have taken it up; but on the contrary, I have endeavoured to introduce them with some anecdote or other, which serves to weave them into the thread of the work. Most of the translations will be found in metre, in which I have strove to copy the free style of our old metrical comic poets: some I have turned into rhyme, where the thought allowed it, and the expressions were terse and epigrammatical: others I have put into prose; and in all I have been as close and faithful to the original, as the language and my construction of the author would permit. If the candid reader will accept this preface in apology, I shall give him no further trouble on the subject.

Epicharmus, in one of his comedies (we may suppose The Statesman) introduces the following retort from some man of low birth to a prating old woman, who is vapouring about her ancestry.

'Good gossip, if you love me, prate no more:
What are your genealogies to me?
Away to those, who have more need of them!

Let the degenerate wretches, if they can,
Dig up dead honour from their father's tombs,
And boast it for their own—Vain, empty boast!
When every common fellow that they meet,
If accident hath not cut off the scroll,
Can shew a list of ancestry as long.
You call the Scythians barbarous, and despise them;
Yet Anacharsis was a Scythian born;
And every man of a like noble nature,
Tho' he were moulded from an Æthiop's loins,
Is nobler than your pedigrees can make him.'

The following is a false antithesis, in which bodily strength is substituted for mental—

'It demands the strength of a lion to subdue the weakness of love.'

MORAL MAXIMS.

'Be sober in thought! be slow in belief! These are the sinews of wisdom.'

'It is the part of a wise man to foresee what ought to be done, so shall he not repent of what is done.'

'Throw not away thine anger upon trifles! Reason, and not rage, should govern.'

'Mankind are more indebted to industry than to ingenuity: the gods set up their favours at a price, and industry is the purchaser.'

'A man without merit, shall live without envy; but who would wish to escape on these terms?'

'Live so as to hold yourself prepared either for a long life, or for a short one!'

There is no subject, which the comic poets whet their wits upon more frequently than marriage. The wives of Syracuse were not much obliged to Epicharmus for the following sally.

'Marriage is like a cast of the dice: if you get a

wife of good morals and a quiet temper withal, happy is your lot: if you light upon a gadding, gossipping, extravagant hussy, it is not a wife you wed, but an eternal plague in the apparel of a woman. There is not in the habitable globe so dire a torment; I feel it to my sorrow; the better luck is his, who has never tried it.'

Mr. Congreve, in his Double Dealer, has the following passage between Mellafont and Cynthia upon the very eve of their nuptials.

Cynth. Then I find marriage is like cards; if either of us have a good hand, it is an accident of fortune.

Mell. No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls: Fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together; but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

Cynth. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mell. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.

Neither this, nor any part of the scene to which it appertains, is in Mr. Congreve's best manner. The wit does not flow, but is pumped up with labour, and not very clean when it comes.

Of Phormis, the contemporary of Epicharmus, no fragments are to be found.

Chionides of Athens wrote comedy before the Persian æra, and is the oldest writer of the Athenian stage. All the memorials I can obtain of him are, that he wrote three plays, intitled, The Heroes, The Lyars, and The Poor Men.

Magnes was an Athenian, and began to appear as a writer of Comedy, whilst Chionides was living: Aristophanes makes mention of him in his play of The Knights. The Scholiast in his comment on the passage observes, that all his works are perished,

nothing remaining but the titles of nine comedies, of which two bear the same names with two of Aristophanes, viz. The Frogs, and The Birds; the same Scholiast informs us that Magnes bore away two prizes.

Dinolochus was contemporary with Magnes: he used the Doric dialect, and is said to have produced fourteen plays. Some place his birth at Syracuse, others at Agrigentum. Suidas says he flourished so early as Olymp. LXXIII. but this ill agrees with the circumstance of his being the son, or, as others contend, the scholar of Epicharmus. His works have totally perished.

These five poets, three of whom were Sicilians, must be called The Fathers of Comedy, and all that now remains of them is comprised in the few short passages here inserted.

Whilst their comedies were in representation, tragedy was advancing under Pratinas and Chœrilus, and Æschylus had already taken possession of the stage: Sophocles and Euripides, were born, the former six years before the latter: Ion, surnamed Xuthis, son of Orthomenes of Chios, began to write tragedy in the first year of Olymp. LXXXII. Æschylus being then dead. Theognis, (from the coldness of his drama nicknamed Snow) was contemporary with Ion.

The magistracy of Athens in Olymp. LXXXV. when Myrrichides was archon, published a decree, prohibiting the representation of comedies in Athens: this decree held in force only two years under Glaucides and Theopompus; for when Euthymenes succeeded to that annual dignity, he found it expedient to gratify the people by a revocation of the edict, and the comic muse was reinstated on the stage by the celebrated triumvirate of Eupolis, Cratinus and

Aristophanes; Cratinus opening the theatre with his celebrated comedy of The Winter Amusements, Eupolis with The New Moons, and Aristophanes with The Acharnensians.

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Cratinus, Eupolis and Aristophanes are generally classed together as rivals and principals in what is called The Old Comedy. Cratinus was senior in age to both his competitors, and Eupolis is charged by the old annotator upon Aristophanes of having copied from him very freely: I confess this is stubborn authority, and yet it seems hard to believe that Eupolis, who was so constantly engaged in competition with his rival, should expose himself to certain detection of so disgraceful a sort; and had it been so, I should rather have expected to meet with the charge in the text of Aristophanes, than in the comment: I must add, that upon the closest search I can find nothing that favours this imputation in any other author which speaks of Eupolis, but many circumstances on the contrary, which seem to place his pretensions to originality on as good ground as that of his contemporaries, with whom he is equally celebrated.

These poets were in high favour with the people on account of the boldness and personality of their satire, and for the same reason proportionably obnoxious to the nobles and magistrates, whom they lashed without mercy. Aristophanes was much the

least bitter of the three, and yet we have some smart specimens of his severity. Persius seems to make this distinction in the following passage—

Audaci quicunque afflate Cratino,
Iratum Eupolidem prægrandi cum sene palles,
Aspice et hæc.

In these lines he characterizes Cratinus and Eupolis by the epithets of *audax* and *iratus*, whereas he introduces Aristophanes under the description only of *prægrandis senex*, which is interpreted to refer to the superior gravity and dignity of his style.

Horace, in the fourth satire of his first book, instances these three poets by pre-eminence from amongst all the writers of the old comedy.

Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetæ,
Atque alii, quorum comœdia prisca virorum est,
Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus aut fur,
Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.

The comic poets, in its earliest age,
Who form'd the manners of the Grecian stage,
Was there a villain, who might justly claim
A better right of being damn'd to fame,
Rake, cut-throat, thief, whatever was his crime,
They freely stigmatiz'd the wretch in rhime.

FRANCIS.

It appears by this quotation, that Horace does not consider their comedy in the same light with Aristotle, as if they represented human nature in worse colours than it deserved.

Quintilian expressly says, that these are the chief writers of the old comedy—*Plures ejus auctores; Aristophanes tamen et Eupolis, Cratinusque præcipui*:—And he recommends the old Greek comedy, and these authors in particular, as the best

model (Homer only excepted) for his orator to form himself upon: inasmuch as it is there only he will find the Attic style in its purity and perfection; and though the old comedy, as he observes, is chiefly occupied in wit and sarcasm for the purpose of chastising vice, yet it has many excellences of a more general sort: it is energetic, elegant, and full of graces; so that if Homer alone (who like his own Achilles has the privilege of being always put above comparison) be excepted, no other school for oratory can come in competition with this.

CRATINUS.

Cratinus was the son of Callimedes an Athenian; we have the titles of at least thirty comedies of his writing, so that Suidas is mistaken in ascribing to him only twenty-one: he was a poet of strong imagination, and a florid lively style; he carried away no less than nine prizes, which is a large proportion of success, compared with others, who rank amongst the highest both in the comic and tragic line. A second edict came out in his time for restraining the licentiousness of the stage in point of personality, and Cratinus, in common with the rest of his contemporaries, found himself obliged to divert his satire from the living to the dead: Sarcasms were now levelled at men's productions, not at their persons; the tragic authors felt the chief weight of the attack, though even Homer did not escape, as may be gathered from 'The Ulysses' of Cratinus, in which, he parodies and ridicules the Odyssey.

Cratinus lived to an extreme old age, though according to the loose morals of the Greeks he indulged his passions both natural and unnatural

without restraint: he carried his love of wine to such excess, that he got the name of Φιλοπότης, launching out in praise of drinking, and rallying all sobriety out of countenance, asserting that no author can be good for any thing, who does not love his bottle, and that dramatic poets in particular ought to drink hard, as a duty due to Bacchus for his peculiar patronage and protection of the stage. Horace, who was not very averse from his doctrine, quotes his authority in the first lines of an epistle to Mecænas.

Prisco si credis, Mecænas docte, Cratino,
Nulla placere diu nec vivere carmina possunt,
Quæ scribuntur aquæ potoribus.

O learn'd Mecænas, hear Cratinus speak,
And take this maxim from the gay old Greek;
No verse shall please, or lasting honours gain,
Which coldly flows from water-drinker's brain.

As for the love of wine, it seems to have stood in the place of a merit with the Greeks; but Cratinus's excess was attended in his old age with some marks of weakness and want of retention, incidental to an exhausted constitution, which gave a handle to Aristophanes, who was a younger man (and not much more abstemious) to bring his old competitor on the stage, and hold him up to ridicule for this infirmity. The charge was unmanly, and roused the aged veteran to return the attack: Cratinus, then nearly approaching to an hundred, had left off writing, but he was not yet superannuated, and lived to compleat a comedy, which he appositely entitled 'The Flaggon.' In the plot of this piece he feigns himself married to comedy, whom he personifies, and represents the lady in disgust with her husband for his unconjugal neglect, on which account she states

her charge, and roundly sues for an actual divorce: upon this hearing, certain friends and advocates are introduced on the scene in behalf of the party accused, who make suit to the dame to stay her proceedings, and not be over hasty in throwing off an old spouse; but on the contrary recommended to her to enter calmly into an amicable discussion of her grievances: to this proposal she at length accedes, and this gives occasion to take up the charge of Aristophanes, accusing the old bard of drunkenness and the concomitant circumstances, which had been published with so much ill-nature to make him ridiculous at the end of life. Then follows a very pleasant refutation of all these libels, by which he contrives to turn the laugh against Aristophanes, and so concludes the comedy. One feels a satisfaction even at the distance of ages to know, that the old poet bore away the prize with this very comedy, and soon after expired in the arms of victory at the age of ninety-seven, in the first year of Olymp. LXXXIX.

The Athenians gave him a monument, and an epitaph, in which they omit all mention of his fine talents, and record nothing but his drunkenness. He spared no man when living, and even death itself could not protect him from retaliation.

"Θανόντος ἀνδρὸς ὡς ἀπώλλολαι χάρις."

STESICHORUS.

The evil that he did liv'd after him,
The good was all interred with his bones.

SHAKSPEARE.

There is scaree a fragment of this poet, once so great a favourite, that is now to be found; the very few scraps of sentences remaining are too imperfect

to merit a translation: one little spark of his genius however will be seen in the following epigrammatic turn of thought upon the loss of a statue, which being the workmanship of Dædalus, he supposes to have made use of its privilege, and escaped from its pedestal.

My statue's gone! By Dædalus 'twas made.
It is not stolen therefore; it has stray'd.

EUPOLIS.

Eupolis became a very popular author some years before the death of Cratinus: the bold strong spirit of his satire recommended him to the public more than the beauties and graces of his style, which he was not studious to polish. He attacked the most obnoxious and profligate characters in Athens, without any regard to his personal safety; to expose the cheat, and ridicule the impostor was the glory of his muse, and neither the terrors of the magistracy, nor the mysteries of superstition could divert him from it. He wrote two comedies professedly against Autolycus the Areopagite, whose misbehaviour in the Chæronensian war had made him infamous, and he called them after his name 'The first and second Autolycus.' In his famous comedy called 'The Baptæ' he inveighs against the effeminate turpitude of his countrymen, whom he exhibits dancing after the manner of the lascivious priests of Cotytto (viz. 'The Baptæ)' in the habits and fashion of female minstrels.

Talia secretâ coluerunt orgia tedâ
Cecropiam soliti Bapta lassare Cotyttо.

JUVEN.

The prevailing account of his death is, that the persons, whom he had satirized in this play of the 'Baptæ,' suborned certain assassins to throw him into the sea, as he was passing the Hellespont with the Athenian forces then on an expedition against the Lacedæmonians; and several authorities impute this revengeful deed to Alcibiades, who had been severely handled in that piece; but Cicero in his first epistle of the sixth book to Atticus speaks of this report as a vulgar error, and quotes Eratosthenes for the fact of Eupolis having written certain comedies after the time, when the event of his death is dated—*redarguit Eratosthenes; affert enim quas ille post id tempus fabulas docuerit.*

Pausanias tells us, that his tomb was erected upon the banks of the Æsopus in Sicyonia, and as it is not likely this honour should be paid to his memory by the Sicyonians, he being an Athenian born, unless he had died in their country; the authority of Pausanias seems to confirm the account of Eratosthenes, and discredit the fable of his being thrown into the Hellespont.

In his comedy called 'The People,' by the fiction of the scene he raises the shades of their departed orators and dæmagogues from the dead; and when Pericles, last of the troop, arises, the poet demands, 'Who is it that appears?' The question being answered, and the spirit of Pericles dismissed, he pronounces his encomium—'That he was pre-eminent as an oraror, for man never spoke as he spoke: when he started like a courser in the race, he threw all competitors out of sight, so rapid was the torrent of his eloquence; but with that rapidity there flowed such sweetness and persuasion from his lips, that He alone of all

orators struck a sting into the very souls of his hearers, and left it there to remain for ever.'

I think it probable the following fragment has been the opening speech of this very comedy; for in it he addresses the People, and complains of the preference they are apt to bestow upon foreigners, to the neglect of their own countrymen—'Receiving every thing with favour that falls from their lips, and applauding them as oracles of human wisdom; whereas, if any one of your own countrymen addresses you (though in no respect their inferior) you look down upon him with contempt; nay, you are ready to pronounce that the man is in his dotage; a fool who never had senses, or a madman who has lost them—but hark ye, gentlemen! let me have a word with you at starting; let me prevail with you to revoke these unjust proceedings, and give a fellow-citizen and your humble servant a fair hearing and impartial judgment.'

I suspect this to be a sly blow at Aristophanes, who was not an Athenian born, and perhaps at this time had not his adoption. He proceeds to lament the state of public affairs, and the degeneracy of the times; for in the old comedy it was usual for the poet to harangue the theatre, either in the opening of the piece, or at any convenient interval between the scenes, sometimes in his own person, sometimes by the chorus. We cannot wonder if such sentiments as the following, delivered from the stage, should render Eupolis obnoxious to men in power.

Address to the Audience by Eupolis.

'Of many things, which offer themselves to my consideration, I cannot find words to speak, so

penetrated am I with affliction, when I turn my thoughts to the condition of the commonwealth; for you must be conscious, O citizens, it was not so administered in times past, when men of high birth, men, whose rank, fortune and merit gave them a consideration in the state, filled the first offices of government: To such we deferred, as to the deities themselves; for they merited our respect, and under their protection we enjoyed security: now we have no other guide in our election but blind ignoble chance, and on whatsoever head it falls, though he be the worst and meanest of mankind, he starts up a great man at once, and is installed with all proper solemnity a rogue in state.'

Here the poet speaks out of the rostrum rather than from the stage: this is plain bold language; and tempts me to call our countryman Ben Jonson on the scene, who was deep in all these remnants of the old Greek poets, and frequently talks the very language of the Athenian theatre.

Asper, in character of Presenter of the play, thus opens the comedy of Every Man out of his Humour.

Address to the Audience by B. Jonson.

Away!
Who is so patient of this impious world,
That he can check his spirit, or rein his tongue?—
Who can behold such prodigies as these,
And have his lips seal'd up? Not I; my soul
Was never ground into such oily colours,
To flatter vice and daub iniquity:
But with an armed and resolved hand
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time,
Naked as at their birth———

I fear no mood stampt in a private brow,
When I am pleas'd to unmask a public vice.

I fear no strumpet's drugs, nor ruffian's stab,
Should I detect their hateful luxuries:
No broker's, usurer's, or lawyer's gripe,
Were I dispos'd to say, They're all corrupt.
I fear no courtier's frown, should I applaud
The easy flexure of his supple hams.
Tut! these are so innate and popular,
That drunken custom would not shame to laugh
In scorn at him, that should not dare to tax them.
&c. &c.

This is the very spirit of the old Greek comedy, speaking through the organs of our English Aristophanes, and old Ben fills the character of the *præ-grandis senex*, as well as he for whom it was designed. It is the *Comœdia*, *vocem tollens*, and asserting her determination to keep up her rights according to antient custom of her founders—*Siquis erat dignus describi*. — In the third year of Olymp. LXXXIX. which was two years after the decease of Cratinus, Eupolis acted his comedy called 'The Flatterers,' Alcæus being archon. I cannot doubt but the following is a fragment of this comedy; it is a part of the speech of a parasite, and runs over a few of the arts, by which he gulls the rich boobies that fall in his way.

The Parasite of Eupolis.

Mark now, and learn of me the thriving arts,
By which we parasites contrive to live:
Fine rogues we are, my friend (of that be sure)
And dainti'y we gull mankind.—Observe!
First I provide myself a nimble thing
To be my page, a varlet of all crafts;
Next two new suits for feasts and gala-days,
Which I promote by turns, when I walk forth
To sun myself upon the public square:
There if perchance I spy some rich dull knave,

Strait I accost him, do him reverence,
And, saunt'ring up and down, with idle chat
Hold him awhile in play; at every word,
Which his wise worship utters, I stop short
And bless myself for wonder; if he ventures
On some vile joke, I blow it to the skies,
And, hold my sides for laughter—Then to supper
With others of our brotherhood to mess
In some night-cellar on our barley cakes,
And club inventions for the next day's shift.

The Parasite of Ben Jonson.

MOSCA.

———Oh! your parasite
Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
Not bred 'mongst clods and clot poles here on earth.
I muse the mystery was not made a science,
It is so liberally profest. Almost
All the wise world is little else in nature
But parasites and sub-parasites. And yet
I mean not those, that have your bare town-art,
To know who's fit to feed them; have no house,
No family, no care, and therefore mould
Tales for men's ears, to bait that sense—nor those,
With their court dog-tricks, that can fawn and fleer,
Make their revenue out of legs and faces,
Echo, My Lord, and lick away a moth;
But your fine elegant rascal, that can rise,
And stoop almost together like an arrow,
Shoot thro' the air as nimbly as a star,
Turn short as doth a swallow, and be here,
And there, and here, and yonder all at once;
Present to any humour, all occasion,
And change a visor swifter than a thought;
This is the creature had the art born with him.

Lucian's Parasite, which is a master-piece of character and comic writing, and Horace's dialogue between Tiresias and Ulysses (which is the fifth sa-

tire of the second book) might perhaps be traced in passages of this comedy of Eupolis, if we had it entire.

Eupolis in his Lacedæmonians attacks both the public and private character of Cimon, charging him with improper partiality for the Lacedæmonians, with drunkenness, and even with an incestuous commerce with his own sister Pnyce: Plutarch takes notice of this attack, and says it had a great effect in stirring up the populace against this celebrated commander.

He wrote his comedy, entitled Marica, against the orator Hyperbolus, whom Thucydides mentions to have been banished by Ostracism.

We have the titles of upwards of twenty plays of this author's composition.

NUMBER CXXXVIII.

ARISTOPHANES.

Ut templum Charites, quod non labatur, haberent, Insendre tuum pectus, Aristophanes.

JOS. SCALIGER EX PLATONE.

This is an eulogy the more honourable to Aristophanes, as it fell from Plato, the disciple of Socrates. If I were to collect all the testimonies, that are scattered through the works of the learned in behalf of the author we are now about to review, I should fill my pages with panegyric; but this I am the less concerned to do, as the reader has a part

of him in possession, which as it is near a fourth of the whole man, he has more than the foot by which to measure this Hercules.

Both the parentage and birth-place of Aristophanes are doubtful: he was an adopted, not a natural, citizen of Athens, and I incline to think he was the son of Philippus, a native of Ægina, where our poet had some patrimony. He was in person very tall, bony and robust, and we have his own authority for his baldness; but whether this was as disgraceful at Athens, as it was amongst the Romans, I have not been anxious to inquire. He was in private life of a free, open and companionable temper, and his company was sought after by the greatest characters of the age with all possible avidity: Plato, and even Socrates, shared many social hours with him; he was much the most popular character in Athens, as the great dæmagogue Cleon experienced to his cost, not to mention Socrates himself: every honour that could be paid to a poet was publicly bestowed upon Aristophanes by the Athenian people; nor did they confine their rewards to honorary prizes only, but decreed him fines and pecuniary confiscations from those, who ventured to attack him with suits and prosecutions: Dionysius of Syracuse in vain made overtures to him of the most flattering sort, at the time when Æschines and Aristippus, Socratic philosophers, were retained in his court with so much infamy to their private characters, and when even Plato himself had solicited his notice by three several visits to Syracuse, where he had not the good fortune to render himself very agreeable. The fame of Aristophanes had reached to the court of Persia, and his praises were there sounded by the great king himself, who considered him not

only as the first poet, but as the most conspicuous personage at Athens. I do not find him marked with any other immorality, than that of intemperance with regard to wine, the fashionable excess of the time, and in some degree a kind of prerogative of his profession, a *licentia poetica*: Athenæus the Deipnosophist says he was drunk when he composed, but this is a charge that will not pass upon any man who is sober; and if we rejected it from Sophocles in the case of Æschylus, we shall not receive it but with contempt from such an accuser as Athenæus. He was not happy in his domestic connections, for he naturally declares that 'he was ashamed of his wife —— Τὴν γυναῖκα δ' αἰσχύνομαι and as for his two sons, Philippus and Ararotes, they did him as little credit, and he considered them accordingly. He was blest with a good constitution, and lived to turn above seventy years, though the date of his death is not precisely laid down.

Though he was resolute in opposing himself to the torrent of vice and corruption, which overspread the manners of his country, yet he was far more temperate in his personal invective than his contemporaries. He was too sensitive in his nature to undertake the performance of his own parts in person, which was general with all the comic poets of his time; and he stood their raillery for not venturing to tread the stage as they did. Amipsias and Aristonymus, both rival authors, charged him with availing himself of the talents of other people from consciousness of his own insufficiency: their raillery could not draw him out, till his favourite actor Callistratus declined undertaking the part of Cleon in his personal comedy of 'The Knights,' dreading the resentment of that powerful dæmagogue,

who was as unforgiving as he was imperious: In this dilemma Aristophanes conquered his repugnance, and determined upon presenting himself on the stage for the first time in his life: he dressed himself in the character of this formidable tribune; and having coloured his face with vermilion up to the hue of the brutal person he was to resemble, he entered on the part in such a style of energy, and with such natural expression, that the effect was irresistible; and the proud factious Cleon was stript of his popularity, and sentenced in a fine of five talents by the knight's decree, as damages for the charge he had preferred against the author touching his right of citizenship, which was awarded and secured to him by the same instrument.

Such was Aristophanes in person, manners and character: as a poet I might refer the learned reader to his works, which speak so ably for themselves: they are not only valuable as his remains, but when we consider them as the only remains, which give us any complete specimens of the Greek comedy, they become inestimable through the misfortunes of all the rest. We receive them as treasures thrown up from a wreck, or more properly as one passenger escaped out of a fleet, whose narrative we listen to with the more eagerness and curiosity, because it is from this alone we can gain intelligence of the nature of the expedition, the quality of the armament, and the characters and talents of the commanders, who have perished and gone down into the abyss together.

The comedies of Aristophanes are universally esteemed to be the standard of Attic writing in its greatest purity; if any man would wish to know the language as it was spoken by Pericles, he must seek it in the scenes of Aristophanes, where he is

not using a foreign or affected diction, for the purpose of accommodating it to some particular or extravagant character. The antient authors, both Greek and Roman, who had all the productions of the Athenian stage before them, speak of him with such rapture and admiration, as to give him a decided preference before all other comic poets, with an exception as I believe of Plutarch only, who brings him into comparison with Menander, and after discussing their different pretensions decides peremptorily for Menander: this criticism of Plutarch's I shall reserve for future consideration; and when I said that he is single in his preference of Menander, perhaps I ought to recal the expression, as that poet has his admirers, but none that I know of, who have deliberately given judgment in his favour upon a critical comparison with Aristophanes, except Plutarch abovementioned.

The drama of Aristophanes is of a mixed species; sometimes personal, at other times inclining to parody, according to the character of the middle comedy: he varies and accommodates his style to his subject and the speakers on the scene; on some occasions it is elevated, grave, sublime and polished to a wonderful degree of brilliancy and beauty; on others it sinks and descends into humble dialogue, provincial rusticity, coarse naked obscenity, and even puns and quibbles: the versatility of his genius is admirable; for he gives us every rank and description of men in his scenes, and in every one is strictly characteristic. In some passages, and frequently in his chorusses, he starts out of the ordinary province of comedy into the loftiest flights of poetry, and in these I doubt if Æschylus or Pindar have surpassed him: in sentiment and good sense he is not inferior to Euripides, and in the

acuteness of his criticisms equalled by none: in the general purport of his moral he seldom, if ever, fails; but he works occasionally with unclean tools, and, like Juvenal in the lower ages, chastises vice by an open exposure of its turpitude, offending the ear, whilst he aims to mend the heart. This habit of plain speaking was the fashion of the times he wrote in, and the audience demanded and would have it; that he may be studied by the purest readers we should conclude, when we are told he was the pillow companion of a Christian saint, as the well known anecdotes of Chrysostom will testify. If we cannot entirely defend the indelicacy of his muse, we cannot deny but that a great share of the blame rests with the spectators: a dramatic poet cannot model his audience, but in a certain degree must of necessity conform to their taste and humour: it can be proved that Aristophanes himself laments the hard task imposed upon him of gratifying the public at the expence of decency; but with the example of the poet Crasinus before his eyes, who was driven from the stage because he scrupled to amuse the public ear with tawdry jests, it is not to be wondered at, if an author, emulous of applause, should fall in with the wishes of the theatre, unbecoming as they were: let me add, in further palliation of this fault, that he never puts obscenity but in the mouths of obscene characters, and so supplies it as to give his hearers a disgust for such unseemly habits. Morality I confess deserves a purer vehicle, yet I contend that his purpose was honest, and I dare believe went farther towards reforming the loose Athenians, than all the indecisive positions of the philosophers, who being enlisted into sects and factions scarce agreed in any one point of common morality.

This part of his defence would have been very easily handled a century or two ago; Ben Johnson, for instance, could have helped his argument out with his own example, if occasion had required; but the task falls very heavy upon an advocate in this age, which is of purer ears than to listen to obscenity; and though my particular difficulties have thereby been increased, I shall never repine under the weight of any burthen, which the merit of my contemporaries lays upon me.

His wit is of various kinds; much is of a general and permanent stamp; much is local, personal and untransferable to posterity: no author still retains so many brilliant passages, yet none has suffered such injury by the depredations of time: of his powers in ridicule and humour, whether of character or dialogue, there might be no end to instances: if Plautus gives us the model of Epicharmus, he does not equal him; and if Terence translates Menander, his original does not approach him in these particulars: I doubt if the sum total of wit and humour in all their stage-lacqueys would together balance the single character of Cario in the Plutus. His satire, whether levelled against the vices and follies of the people at large, against the corruption of the dæmagogues, the turpitude and chicanery of the philosophers, or the arrogant self-sufficiency of the tragic poets, cuts with an edge that penetrates the character, and leaves no shelter for either ignorance or criminality.

Aristophanes was author of above sixty comedies, though they are erroneously stated under that amount. The Plutus now in our hands (which is the second he wrote of that title) has been twice published in our language by two different translators; one of these I have seen, which was jointly

executed by the celebrated Henry Fielding and the Rev. Mr. Young: there is an English translation, as I am told, of 'The Clouds,' but this has never been in my hands, and also a very late one of 'The Frogs' in metre, which I have perused. Much praise is due to the labours of learned men, who thus endeavour to make his wit current amongst us; and every man who knows the difficulties of their task, will find his candour strongly called upon to excuse any errors or inequalities, that may appear in their performances.

NUMBER CXXXIX.

I SAID in my former paper that Plutarch had made a comparison between Aristophanes and Menander, and given his decided judgment for the latter. It might well be expected, that a Greek of the lower ages, living in the time of Trajan, and in court-favour with that emperor, should prefer a polished elegant author like Menander to one so bold, personal and sarcastic as the poet he compares with him. Horace even in the time of Augustus had begun to decry the *Plautinos Sales*, and the manners were much more refined in Plutarch's time than in his. As we can take little estimate of Menander from the fragments only of his comedies which now remain, we cannot see what general reasons Plutarch, or any other critic of his time, might have for preferring him: but as far as he has entered into

strictures and objections in his examination of Aristophanes, so far we can follow him; this part at least of his criticism is still open to be controverted, and if it shall appear that he has condemned one party without reason, it may be presumed he has preferred the other without justice.

Plutarch asserts that Aristophanes is a punster, a quibbler upon words, and ridiculously given to parody. It is unfortunate for this charge that he follows it up with quotations, in every one of which Aristophanes is not only to be defended but applauded; he could not have selected passages less to the purpose; and the accusation has accordingly been turned against him by Frischlinus and other advocates of the poet.

He arraigns the style of Aristophanes on account of its inequalities and variations, observing that it is sometimes high and sometimes low, now turgid and inflated, now grovelling and depressed—as if he had not been aware that the great variety of characters, which his comedy exhibits, naturally demands as great a variety of style: he applauds Menander for the uniform and equal tenor of his style, not seeming to recollect that his comedy on the contrary had one uniform complexion, contained no chorusses and introduced no living characters; whereas Aristophanes, according to the spirit of the old comedy, makes use of chorusses, many of which are of so fanciful and imaginary a nature, that it is necessary to employ all the powers of poetry in their display, and in some cases even to create a new style (and almost language) for the occasion: he also introduces gods, heroes, poets, orators, philosophers, ambassadors, priests, on his scene; some of these professedly demand a swelling tragic pomp of words, for instance Æschylus, So-

phocles and Euripides: in short, the very excellence of Aristophanes is discrimination of style and character. Should Socrates and a slave speak in the same phrase? Should Lamachus (a mere *miles gloriosus*) talk in the tone of a beggarly Megarensian pedlar? Certainly not; nor is there any need to dwell longer on this criticism of Plutarch's, in which the ingenious author has shewn little of his usual candour or judgment. That he should be prepossessed in favour of the new comedy is very natural; elegant and moral fictions are both more pleasing and more proper subjects for the drama, than bold and coarse truths and living realities: the even suavity of Menander's style might be more to his taste thon the irregular sublimity of Aristophanes's; but when I see him manage the argument in a manner so much below his usual sagacity, I cannot help suspecting there might be some other besides general prejudice in his mind against Aristophanes, and I make no doubt he had fostered strong resentments against him for his attacks upon Socrates; I also see some grounds for believing that he had been opposed by Pliny in his partiality for Menander, whom that author calls *omnis luxuriæ interpres*; a charge which was resented by Plutarch, who nevertheless was compelled to admit it: It is not improbable therefore that this might have given some occasion to him for entering into a more formal comparison between the two authors, and for publishing his strictures upon Aristophanes. Upon looking over the titles of the comedies of the last-named author, which are lost, I find one intitled *Bœotia*, which play was translated and brought upon the Roman stage by Plautus, as it is generally thought, though we are told that M. Varro

gave it to one Aquilius; be this as it may, the comedy was produced by one or the other, and there is a fragment of it in proof, which would be found in Pareus's edition of Plautus: here is fresh reason for Plutarch (who was a Bœotian) to take up a resentment against Aristophanes; and, if it were a subject worth following, I could shew that Plutarch's national prejudices were uncommonly strong: the comedy indeed is not in existence, both original and translation being perished; but we can easily believe that Bœotia did not escape out of Aristophanes's hands without a pretty smart flagellation; and this was the more galling to Plutarch, because it was naturalized on the Roman stage, and, if it was still in representation, might give a handle to the wits of the time for a run upon his native country. But I perceive my zeal is carrying me into an unprofitable research, and I proceed with my subject.

Aristophanes has sometimes been reproached for his attacks upon Euripides; but this author was a fair subject for satire in his literary character, and, though he was the friend of Socrates, his private morals were no less open to reproof. The voice of the heathen world has been so loud in the praise of Socrates; he is so decidedly the hero of all the Ciceros and declaimers upon morality, that even now, after so many centuries of Christianity, it is with a kind of superstitious reverence we approach his character. His contemporaries, who saw him in the nearest light, treat him with the least respect: Aristophanes (as Ben Jonson expresses it) 'hoisted him up with a pulley, and made him play the philosopher in a basket; measure how many foot a flea could skip geometrically by a just scale, and edify the people from the engine.'—Time and prejudice

have since cast a veil before him, that it would be a hardy deed to attempt to withdraw.

This attack of Aristophanes has doomed him to almost universal detestation; the praise we give him is no more than his superior genius extorts, and it is paid grudgingly, like a tax, without cordiality or good-will: we admire him for his bold attacks upon Cleon, and we can find some palliation for his strictures upon Euripides; the languid affectation of the poet, and the turbulent ferocity of the demagogue, justify the satirist; but when he assaults the sacred character of Socrates, when he arraigns the unspotted purity of the great master of morality, it is no longer satire, it is sacrilege. But is all this to pass without one word for the poet? Was he given up by his contemporaries for this atrocious act? was he given up by the friends and disciples of Socrates? By none; not even by Plato himself, who on the contrary caressed, admired and extolled him both in verse and prose; he adopted his sentiments on the subject of *Love*, and engrafted them into his own *Symposium*: he applauded him to Dionysius of Syracuse, and put his comedies into his hands as the only pure and perfect model of Attic elegance: the tyrant read them, admired them, and even rehearsed them by heart; nay he did more, he turned poet himself, and wrote a play for the Athenian stage, which of course was honoured with a prize. And now why should we be more angry than Plato was? What have we discovered, which he did not know, that we should take the matter up so high? We have discovered that Aristophanes took a bribe of Melitus and his faction to attack Socrates, and pave the way for their criminal charge, by which he suffered; and this we take upon credit from Ælian's insinuations in an article of his Various History,

which for its authority in this case is about as good an evidence, as any story out of the Incredibilia of Palæphatus Heraclitus. Ælian however does not hardily advance this as a fact, but hooks it in by way of question—'Where is the absurdity, he asks, of supposing that the poet, who was known to be needy, had taken a bribe?'—This is a mere insinuation, by which he tries the credulity of his readers: if they will believe it, so much the better for his purpose; if not, he has nothing else to offer; he has done his best to blacken the character of Aristophanes in this case, as he did in that of his intemperance: he has accused him of writing plays when he was drunk, and now he accuses him of taking a bribe for writing them: the man who believes the one, may take the other into the bargain; for his own part, the improbability stares him so fully in the face, that he immediately subjoins to his insinuation above quoted—'That for the truth of this, it was best known to Aristophanes himself.'—This can never pass with any candid reader. As for the success of the attack, that he confesses was beyond all example; the comedy was applauded to the skies; never did any poet receive such honours from the public, as Aristophanes for this play of The Clouds.

As to the charge of the bribe, I need not observe, that if it was not an easy thing for any advocate of the poet to prove the negative in Hadrian's days, when Ælian threw it out, it cannot be less difficult now to do it, when more than two millenniums have interposed between the fact and our examination of it: and yet we know that Aristophanes, in a short time after the representation of his Clouds, brought this very Melitus, who is supposed to have suborned him by a bribe, before the audience, and

exposed his vicious character with the most unsparing severity. If this is not proving a negative, it is as near it as circumstance and presumption can go.

But there is another part of Ælian's charge which can be more clearly disproved than the above, and this is the assertion he advances, that this attack upon Socrates from the stage was contrived by Anytus and Melitus as a prelude to their criminal accusation of him: this Ælian expressly asserts, adding that the faction were afraid of his popularity, and therefore set Aristophanes upon him to feel the pulse of the people, before they ventured to bring their public charge against him. Here he flatly confutes himself; for had this been the proving attack, what experiment could answer more completely, when even by his own account all Athens was in raptures with the poet, and the comedy went off with more general applause than any was ever known to receive? nay, more than this, Socrates himself, according to Ælian's own account, was present in the theatre, and stood up in view of the people all the while; yet in spite of his presence, in defiance of this bold appeal, the theatre rung with plaudits, and the philosopher only stood up to be a more conspicuous mark of raillery and contempt. Why then did not the faction seize the opportunity and second the blow? Could any thing answer more fully to their wishes? or rather, could any event turn out more beyond their expectation? From Ælian's account we are left to conclude that this was the case, and that this attack was literally a prelude to their charge; but this inference is alike disingenuous with all the rest, for we know from indubitable dates, that The Clouds was acted at least *eighteen years* before the death of Socrates: it was in

the first year of Olymp. LXXXIX. when Isarchus was archon, that Aristophanes acted his first comedy of The Clouds, which was driven off the stage by Alcibiades and his party: in the year immediately following, when Aminias was archon, he brought out the second of that name, which is the comedy in question, now in our hands: these are authentic records; take the earliest date for the death of Socrates, and it will not fall till the first year of Olymp. XCV. when Laches was archon; the interval is as I state it; a pretty reasonable time for such a plot to be ripening: and who now will give credit to Ælian and his Various History?

Having taken some pains to prove what Aristophanes's motives were not, it now remains to shew what they were; but this will be the subject of another Paper.

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THE Clouds is a satirical and personal comedy, the moral of which is to shew how the sophistry of the schools may be employed as an instrument of fraud and evasion in matters of right and property; this is its principal object: but it touches also upon other points by the way, and humorously exposes certain new and chimerical notions about the relation of children to their parents, and of the influence of The Clouds, as superior to the superintending power of Jupiter.

Of its moral therefore, separately considered (com-

prehending the chief duties and relations of men, whether to the gods, to their parents, or to society at large) there can be no doubt; its excellence and importance speak for themselves.

The comedy being written before the practice was restrained of bringing living characters on the stage, a school is here introduced, and the greatest philosopher of the time is represented in person on the stage: this philosopher is Socrates himself, and the school is the school of Socrates.

Socrates is made to advance the hypothesis of The Clouds before mentioned; but it should be constantly kept in remembrance, that he lays down no doctrines, as principles of fraud or injustice: it is not the teacher who recommends, but his disciples who pervert his instructions to the evil purpose of defrauding and eluding their creditors: the like remark holds good in the case of the natural duty of children to their parents: the son in the play it is true strikes and beats his father on the stage, and he quotes the maxims of Socrates in justification; but he does not quote them as positive rules and injunctions for an act so atrocious; he only shews that sophistry may be turned to defend that, or any other thing equally violent and outrageous.

There are two lights in which Socrates is to be viewed; first, in his public character as a teacher; secondly, in his private one as a man. It is chiefly in the former of these that Aristophanes has attacked him; and (as I before observed) it is to expose the evil uses rather than the evil nature of his doctrines, that he brings his school upon the stage; for when the disciple is questioned about the studies which his master is employed in, he makes report of some frivolous and minute researches, which are introduced only for the purpose of raising a harmless

laugh, and so far there can be no offence in this scene.

After all it must be allowed, that these seminaries of sophistry, which the state of Athens thought it necessary to put down by public edict, could not have been improper subjects for dramatic ridicule; for if the schools were found so detrimental to the morals of youth, that the archons and their council, after due deliberation, resolved upon a general expulsion of all masters and teachers thereunto belonging, and effectually did expel them, surely the poet may be acquitted, when he satirizes those obnoxious parties, whom the laws of his country in a short time after cut off from the community.

There can be little doubt but this was a public measure founded in wisdom, if it were for no other reason, than that the Lacedæmonians never suffered a master of philosophy to open school within their realm and jurisdiction, holding them in abhorrence, and proscribing their academies as seminaries of evil manners, and tending to the corruption of youth: it is well known what peculiar care and attention were bestowed upon the education of the Spartan youth, and how much more moral this people was, who admitted no philosophers to settle amongst them, than their Athenian neighbours, in whose dissolute capital they swarmed. In fact, the enormity became too great to be redressed; the whole community was infected with the enthusiasm of these sectaries; and the liberties of Athens, which depended on the public virtue of her citizens, fell a sacrifice to the corruptions of false philosophy: the wiser Lacedæmonians saw the fatal error of their rivals, and availed themselves of its consequences; they rose upon the ruins of Athens, and it was the triumph of wisdom over wit: these philosophers

were ingenious men, but execrable citizens; and when the raillery of the stage was turned against them, the weapons of ridicule could not be more laudably employed.

As for the school of Socrates in particular, though it may be a fashion to extol it, there is no reason to believe it was in better credit than any other; on the contrary, it was in such public disrepute on account of the infamous characters of many of his disciples, and of the disgraceful attachments he was known to have, that it was at one time deserted by every body except Æschines, the parasite of the tyrant Dionysius, and the most worthless man living: this Æschines, his sole and favourite disciple, was arraigned by the pleader Lysias, and convicted of the vilest frauds, and branded as a public cheat: he was a wretch, who employed the sophistry and cunning argumentation, which he learnt of his master, to the purpose only of evading his debts, contracted by the most profligate extravagancies: he afterwards went over to the school of Plato, and when Socrates was dead, had influence enough with Xantippe to obtain of her some dialogues from her husband's papers, which he published as his own, and set up for an author and preceptor in philosophy. It is very probable Aristophanes had in view the character of this very Æschines, when he brings his old man on the scene, consulting Socrates for sophistical evasions how to elude his creditors.

Another of the scholars of Socrates was Simon the sophist, a man whose rapacity became a proverb (Σίμωνος ἁρπακτικώτερος, *Simoni rapacior*). This Simon was such a plunderer of the public money, that Aristophanes, in his strong manner says, 'The very wolves run off upon the sight of Simon.'

The despicable Cleonymus, whose cowardice was

as proverbial as Simon's rapacity, and the profligate Theorus, who buried himself in the stews at Corinth, were also fellow students under Socrates, and it is with just indignation against such execrable characters that Aristophanes exclaims—' O Jupiter, if thy bolts are aimed at perjury, why do these wretches, of all most perjured, Simon, Cleonymus and Theorus, escape the stroke?'

Εἶτ' ἐρεβάλλει τὰς ἐπιόρκους, πῶς δῆτ' οὐχὶ Σίμων' ἐνέπρησεν,
Οὐδὲ Κλεώνυμον, οὐδὲ Θεώρον; καὶ τοι σφὼ γ' εἰσ' ἐπιόρκω.

Aristippus, the Cyreniac founder, was a distinguished disciple of the Socratic school, a parasite also in the court of Dionysius, a buffoon and drunkard, the avowed opposer of every thing virtuous, a master and professor of immorality, who laid down institutes of sensuality, and reduced it to a system.

Of Alcibiades I shall briefly speak, for the stories of Socrates's attachment to him are such as need not be enlarged upon; they obtained so generally, that he was vulgarly called Alcibiades's Silenus: when I glance at these reports in disfavour of a character, which probably stands so high in the opinion of the learned reader, I must hope for a candid interpretation of my motives for collecting these anecdotes, which I do not wish to apply to any other purpose than merely to shew that Aristophanes was not singular in his attack upon this celebrated philosopher; neither did this attack bear so hard against him, as many stories, then in general circulation, otherwise did: great authorities have ascribed his attachment to Alcibiades to the most virtuous principle; common fame, or perhaps (more properly speaking) common defamation, turned it into a charge of the impurest nature: in like manner we

find him ridiculed for his devotion to the noted Aspasia, in whose company he is said to have passed much of his time; and Athenæus quotes some passages of his dialogues with her, which he tells us were published by Herodicus, and which we must either totally reject, or allow him to have been subject to such private weaknesses and frailties as were very unsuitable to his public character: what were the real motives for his frequent visits to Aspasia, as well as for his seeming attachment to the strumpet Theodote, must be left to conjecture; of the fact there is no room to doubt. He is stigmatized for his guilty connections in his youth with his preceptor Archelaus, and yet this charge (however improbable it may seem) rests upon the authority of Aristoxenus, a man of the most candid character, and whose credit stands high with all true critics. Herodicus the historian, whom I have before mentioned, and who lived about three hundred and fifty years before the Christian æra, seems to have treated Socrates with the greatest severity, charging him with sitting up all night drinking and carousing with Agatho and others, whom when he had left drunk and asleep, he reeled into the Lyceum, more fit (in the words quoted from the relater) for the society of Homer's cannibals, than of those he found there: in this debauch it is pretended, that although Phedrus, Eryximachus and many other potent drinkers fled the company, Socrates sate to the last, swallowing drenches of wine out of enormous goblets of silver: he describes him sitting amongst lascivious revellers at a banquet, where dancing-girls and boys were exhibiting their indecent attitudes to the music of harpers and minstrels: he exposes this master of morality entering into a controversy with his scholar Critobulus upon the subject of male

beauty; and because Critobulus had ridiculed him for his ugliness, he asserts that Socrates challenged him to a naked exhibition, and that he actually exposed his unseemly person to a Pathic and a dancing-girl, the appointed umpires of the dispute; the conqueror was to be rewarded with an embrace from each of these umpires, as the prize of superior beauty, and the decision was of consequence given *ex absurdo* to the philosopher, in preference to one of the handsomest young men in Greece, and he enjoyed the prize annexed to the decree. If we can believe this anecdote to have been gravely related by an historian, who lived so near to him in point of time, we shall cease to wonder that Aristophanes had the whole theatre on his side, when such stories were in circulation against the character of Socrates.

As I have no other object in view but to offer what occurs to me in defence of Aristophanes, who appears to have been most unjustly accused of taking bribes for his attack upon Socrates, and of having paved the way for the cruel sentence by which he suffered death, I shall here conclude an invidious task, which my subject, not my choice, has laid upon me.

In our volume of Aristophanes, the comedies are not placed according to the order of time in which they were produced: there is reason to think that The Acharnensians was the first of its author; it was acted in the last year of Olymp. LXXXV. when the edict was reversed which prohibited the representation of comedies; and it is said that Aristophanes brought it out in the name of Callistratus the comedian.

In the last year of Olymp. LXXXVIII. he produced his comedy of The Knights, in which he personally attacks the tribune Cleon.

In the first year of Olymp. LXXXIX. he produced his first comedy of The Clouds, and in the year following his second of that title, which is now in our hands, and ranks as third in the volume.

In the same year was acted his comedy of The Wasps, in which he satirizes the General Chares for his conduct in the unfortunate expedition to Sicily.

In the fourth year of Olymp. XC. we may place his comedy entitled The Peace. In the first of Olymp. XCI. The Lysistrata; and in the second of the same Olympiad that of The Birds.

The Thesmophoriagusæ or Cerealia Celebrantes and Concionatrices, fall within the period of Olymp. XCII. before the death of Euripides, who is satirized in the former of these pieces.

The Frogs were performed in the last year of Olymp. XCIII. after the death of Euripides.

The Plutus, which completes the eleven comedies still remaining, and the last, to which he prefixed his own name, was produced in the fourth year of Olymp. XCVII.

It is generally supposed that we owe these remains of Aristophanes to St. Chrysostom, who happily rescued this valuable, though small, portion of his favourite author from his more scrupulous Christian contemporaries, whose zeal was fatally too successful in destroying every other comic author, out of a very numerous collection, of which no one entire scene now remains.

NUMBER CXLI.

I SHALL now proceed to mention some other principal writers of the old comedy, of whose works, though once the favourites of the Athenian stage, few memorials survive, and these so small and imperfect, and withal so separated from each other (consisting only of short quotations in the scholiasts and grammarians) that it is a task to collect them, which nothing would compensate but the hope of being in some degree the instrument of saving from absolute extinction the names of authors once so illustrious.

Amipsias was a contemporary of Aristophanes, and no mean rival; we have the titles of ten comedies of this author. In some of these his satire was personal, but all of them seem by their titles to have been levelled against the reigning vices of his time, such as The Gamesters, The Glutton, The Beard (in which he inveighed against the hypocrisy and affectation of the priests and philosophers), The Adulterers, The Sappho (wherein the morals of the fair sex were exposed), The Purse, a second attack upon the gamesters, and The Philosopher's Cloak, in which it is understood he glanced pretty severely at Socrates.

Plato was a comic poet, high in time and character; a collection of no less than forty titles of his comedies has been made by the learned Meursius, but very few fragments of these are remaining. Clemens asserts that Aristophanes and Plato were mu-

tually charged of borrowing from each other, which in one sense makes greatly to the reputation of our poet. He is quoted by Plutarch in his Alcibiades, and very honourably mentioned by the famous Galen, by Athenæus, Clemens, Julius Pollux and Suidas. There is a fragment containing four lines and a half, upon a statue of Mercury cut by Dædalus, which has an epigrammatic neatness and point in it, that induced me to render it in rhime: he addresses the statue, mistaking it for a living figure:

'Hoa there! who art thou? Answer me—Art dumb?'
'—Warm from the hand of Dædalus I come;
My name Mercurius, and, as you may prove,
A statue; but his statues speak and move.'

Plato wrote a comedy personally against the General Cleophon, and called it by his name; there are others of the same description in his catalogue, and some of the middle sort: there are a few lines upon the tomb of Themistocles, which have a turn of elegant and pathetic simplicity in them, that deserves a better translation than I can give.

On the Tomb of Themistocles.

By the sea's margin, on the watery strand,
Thy monument, Themistocles, shall stand:
By this directed to thy native shore
The merchant shall convey his freighted store;
And when our fleets are summon'd to the fight,
Athens shall conquer with thy tomb in sight.

The following fragment of a dialogue, between a father and a sophist, under whose tuition he had placed his son, probably belonged either to the comedy called The Beard, or The Philosopher's Cloak: it is pretty much in the spirit of our old English drama.

FATHER.

Thou hast destroy'd the morals of my son,
And turn'd his mind, not so dispos'd, to vice,
Unholy pedagogue! With morning drams,
A filthy custom which he caught from thee,
Clean from his former practice, now he saps
His youthful vigour. Is it thus you school him?

SOPHIST.

And if I did, what harms him? Why complain you?
He does but follow what the wise prescribe,
The great voluptuous law of Epicurus,
Pleasure, the best of all good things on earth;
And how but thus can pleasure be obtain'd?

FATHER.

Virtue will give it him.

SOPHIST.

And what but virtue
Is our philosophy? When have you met
One of our sect flush'd and disguis'd with wine?
Or one, but one of those you tax so roundly,
On whom to fix a fault?

FATHER.

Not one, but all,
All who march forth with supercilious brow
High-arch'd with pride, beating the city-rounds,
Like constables in quest of rogues and outlaws,
To find that prodigy in human nature,
A wise and perfect man! What is your science
But kitchen-science? wisely to descant
Upon the choice bits of a savoury carp,
And prove by logic that his *summum bonum*
Lies in his head; there you can lecture well,
And, whilst your grey beards wag, the gaping guest
Sits wondering *with a foolish face of praise.*

PLATO, COM.

Crates, by birth an Athenian, was first an actor, and afterwards a writer of the old comedy; he performed the principal characters in Cratinus's plays,

and was the great rival of Aristophanes's favourite actors Callistratus and Philonides; we have the titles of more than twenty comedies, and but four small fragments of this author: I have searched for his remains more diligently, from the circumstance of his having been so celebrated an actor; a profession which centers in itself more gifts of nature, education, art and study, than any other. His comedies are said to have been of a very gay and facetious cast; and the author of the Prolegomena to Aristophanes informs us, that he was the first who introduced a drunken character on the Athenian stage; to this anecdote I give credit, because no one could better know how entirely such an attempt depends upon the discretion and address of the actor, who has such a part in his keeping: it is plain the experiment succeeded, because even the tragedians exhibited such characters in succeeding times. Modern experience shews us, how subject such representations are to be outraged; the performer generally forgetting, or not knowing, that his own sobriety should keep the drunkenness he counterfeits within its proper bounds. Aristotle ascribes to Crates another innovation with respect to the iambic metre of the old comedy, which he made more free and apposite to familiar dialogue; this also corresponds with the natural and facetious character of his drama. I cannot say the four small fragments which I have collected bear that stamp; on the contrary, they are of a grave and sententious cast: one of them is an observation on the effects of poverty, which Horace has either literally translated, or struck upon the very same thoughts in the following passage:

Non habet infelix paupertas durius in se
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.

I find a short stricture upon the gluttony of the Thessalians; a remark upon the indecorum of inviting women to wedding suppers, and making riotous entertainments at a ceremony, which modesty would recommend to pass in private, and within the respective family where it occurs.

The last fragment is a short but touching picture of old age, and the vanity of human wishes: I think the turn of thought and expression extremely beautiful.

On old Age.

These shrivell'd sinews and this bending frame,
The workmanship of Time's strong hand proclaim;
Skill'd to reverse whate'er the gods create,
And make that crooked which they fashion straight.
Hard choice for man, to die—or else to be
That tottering, wretched, wrinkled thing you see:
Age then we all prefer; for age we pray,
And travel on to life's last ling'ring day;
Then sinking slowly down from worse to worse,
Find heav'n's extorted boon our greatest curse.

Crates

Phrynichus was a contemporary of Eupolis, and a writer of the old comedy; a dramatic poet of the first class in reputation as well as in time. He was an Athenian by birth, and must not be confounded with the tragic poet of that name. I find the titles of ten comedies of his writing; these are The Ephialtes; The Beard, (the same title with that of Plato); Saturn; The Revellers; The Satyrs; The Tragedians; The Recluse; The Muses; The Priest, and The Weeding-Women. We have no other guides but these titles to guess at the comedies themselves; we see however by some of them what subjects his satire pointed out to the

spectators, in which the philosophers had their share as usual; and by certain fragments it sppears, that Alcibiades was also treated with some personal severity.

Pherecrates is the next author I shall notice, a poet famous in his time, and whose character as well as genius descends to us with the warmest testimonies of high authority. His style was of that sort, which has been proverbially dignified as Most Attic: he acquired such reputation by his poems as well as plays, that the metre he used was called by pre-eminence 'the Pherecratian Metre.' He was no less excellent in his private character than in his poetical one; he was attached to Alexander of Macedon, and accompanied that great conqueror in his expeditions; he lived in intimacy with Plato at Athens, and in some of his comedies was engaged in warm competition with Crates, the actor and author, of whom I have already spoken. Suidas says he wrote seventeen comedies, and the titles of these are still extant: one of them, viz. The Peasants, is mentioned by Plato in his Protagoras: Clemens quotes a passage from his Deserters of great elegance, in which the gods are introduced making their heavy complaints of the frauds put upon them by mankind in their sacrifices and oblations: this poet also has a personal stroke at the immoral character of Alcibiades.

Having quoted a passage from Crates on the subject of old age, I shall now select one from this author on the same; and if the reader is curious to observe how the celebrated rivals expressed themselves on a similar sentiment, he has an opportunity of making the comparison.

ON OLD AGE.

Age is the heaviest burthen man can bear,
Compound of disappointment, pain and care;

For when the mind's experience comes at length,
It comes to mourn the body's loss of strength:
Resign'd to ignorance all our better days,
Knowledge just ripens when the man decays;
One ray of light the closing eye receives,
And wisdom only takes what folly leaves.

PHERECRATES.

Pherecrates intitled one of his comedies The Tyranny; it does not appear what particular object he had in view under this title, but from the following fragment he seems to have levelled some share of his satire against the fair sex—

Remark how wisely ancient art provides
The broad-brimm'd cup with flat expanded sides;
A cup contriv'd for man's discreeter use,
And sober potions of the generous juice:
But woman's more ambitious thirsty soul
Soon long'd to revel in the plenteous bowl;
Deep and capacious as the swelling hold
Of some stout bark she shap'd the hollow mould,
Then turning out a vessel like a tun,
Simp'ring exclaim'd—Observe! I drink but one.

PHERECRATES.

Athenæus has preserved a considerable fragment from this author, extracted from his comedy of The Miners, which I look upon to be as curious a specimen of the old comedy as I have met with. It is a very luxuriant description of the riches and abundance of some former times to which he alludes, strongly dashed with comic strokes of wild extravagance and hyperbole. These Miners were probably the chorus of the drama, which no doubt was of a satirical sort, and pointed at the luxuries of the rich. By the mention made of Plutus in the first line, we may suppose that these *Mines* were of gold, and probably the deity of that precious metal was one of the persons of the drama.

From the Miners of Pherecrates.

The days of Plutus were the days of gold;
The season of high feeding and good cheer:
Rivers of goodly beef and brewis ran
Boiling and bubbling thro' the steaming streets,
With islands of fat dumplings, cut in sops
And slippery gobbets, moulded into mouthfuls,
That dead men might have swallow'd; floating tripes
And fleets of sausages in luscious morsels
Stuck to the banks like oysters: here and there,
For relishers, a salt-fish season'd high
Swam down the savoury tide: when soon behold!
The portly gammon sailing in full state
Upon his smoaking platter heaves in sight,
Encompass'd with his bandoliers like guards,
And convoy'd by huge bowls of frumenty,
That with their generous odours scent the air.
—You stagger me to tell of these good days,
And yet to live with us on our hard fare,
When death's a deed as easy as to drink.
If your mouth waters now, what had it done,
Cou'd you have seen our delicate fine thrushes
Hot from the spit, with myrtle-berries cramm'd,
And larded well with celandine and parsley,
Bob at your hungry lips, crying—Come eat me!
Nor was this all; for pendant over-head
The fairest choicest fruits in clusters hung;
Girls too, young girls just budding into bloom,
Clad in transparent vests, stood near at hand
To serve us with fresh roses and full cups
Of rich and fragrant wine, of which one glass
No sooner was dispatch'd, than strait behold!
Two goblets, fresh and sparkling as the first,
Provok'd us to repeat the encreasing draught.
Away then with your ploughs, we need them not,
Your scythes, your sickles, and your pruning hooks!
Away with all your trumpery at once!
Seed-time and harvest-home and vintage wakes—
Your holidays are nothing worth to us.
Our rivers roll with luxury, our vats
O'erflow with nectar, which providing Jove

Showers down by cataracts; the very gutters
From our house-tops spout wine, vast forests wave
Whose very leaves drop fatness, smoaking viands
Like mountains rise—All nature's one great feast.

Amphis, the son of Amphicrates an Athenian, was a celebrated comic poet: we have the titles of one and twenty comedies, and he probably wrote many more: by these titles it appears that he wrote in the satirical vein of the old comedy, and I meet with a stroke at his contemporary Plato the philosopher. He has a play intitled, The Seven Chiefs against Thebes, which is probably a parody upon Æschylus, and proves that he wrote after the personal drama was prohibited: there is another called The Dicers; and by several scattered passages he appears to have exposed the persons of drunkards, gamesters, courtesans, parasites, and other vicious characters of his time, with great moral severity: there are also two comedies, intitled, Women's Love and Women's Tyranny.

Hermippus was a writer of the old comedy, and an Athenian. No less than forty comedies are given to this author by Suidas; he attacks Pericles for his dissolute morals, and in one of his plays calls him King of the Satyrs, advising him to assume the proper attributes of his lascivious character: he was the son of Lysides, and the brother of Myrtilus, a comic writer also.

Hipparchus, Philonides and Theopompus compleat the list of poets of the old comedy. Philonides, before he became a votary of the muse, followed the trade of a fuller, and, if we are to take the word of Aristophanes, was a very silly vulgar fellow, illiterate to a proverb. Athenæus and Stobæus have however given us some short quotations,

which by no means favour this account, and it is probable there was more satire than truth in Aristophanes's character of him. Theopompus is described as a man of excellent morals, and though he was long afflicted with a defluxion in his eyes, which put him from his studies, time has preserved the titles of twenty-four comedies of his composing: very little remains upon record either of him or his works.

One short fragment of Philonides is all that remains of his works, and it is a specimen which convinces me that we must not always take the character of a poet from a contemporary wit, engaged in the same studies.

Fragment of Philonides.

Because I hold the laws in due respect,
And fear to be unjust, am I a coward?
Meek let me be to all the friends of truth,
And only terrible amongst its foes.

———*Soli æquus virtuti atque ejus amicis.*

I now take leave of what is properly called The Old Comedy: in the further prosecution of this work (if that shall be permitted to me) it is my intention to review the writers of the Middle, and conclude with those of the New Comedy.

No. CXLII.

I SHALL now resume the plan I have pursued in the foregoing numbers, and proceed with my review of the writers of the Greek stage.

In No. CXLI. I took leave of what is properly called the *The Old Comedy*; I am next to ſpeak of that class of authors, who are generally styled writers of the *The Middle Comedy*.

The ſpirit of a free people will discover itſelf in the productions of their ſtage; the comic drama, being a profeſſed repreſentation of living manners, will paint theſe likeneſſes in ſtronger or in fainter colours, according to the degree of licence or reſtraint which may prevail in different places, or in the ſame place at different periods. We are now upon that particular æra in the Athenian conſtitution, when it began to feel ſuch a degree of controul under the riſing power of the Macedonian princes, as put a ſtop to the perſonal licentiouſneſs of the comic poets: If we are to conſider Athens only as the capital ſeat of genius, we muſt bewail this declenſion from her former ſtate of freedom, which had produced ſo brilliant a period in the annals of her literature; but ſpeak of her in a political ſenſe, and it muſt be acknowledged that whatever reſtraints were put upon her liberty, and however humbling the diſgraces were which ſhe incurred, they could not well be more than ſhe merited by her notorious abuſe of public proſperity, and moſt ingrateful treatment of her beſt and moſt de-

serving citizens. When the thunder of oratory was silenced, the flashes of wit were no longer displayed; death stopped the impetuous tongue of Demosthenes, and the hand of power controuled the acrimonious muse of Aristophanes; obedient to the reign, the poet checked his career of personality, and composed his *Æolosicon* upon the plan of what we now denominate the *Middle Comedy*. Cratinus also, though the bitterest of all the old writers, began to sweeten his gall, and, conforming to the necessity of the times, condescended to take up with the resource of parody, and wrote his *Ulysses* upon the same system of reform; no longer permitted to vent his satire upon living characters, he took post on the boldest ground that was left for him to stand on, and opened his attack upon the dead by ridiculing the immortal Odyssey of Homer. The chorus was now withdrawn, and the poet no longer spoke his own sentiments or harangued his audience by proxy; parody is satire of so inferior a species, that if comedy did not very sensibly decline in its middle æra (which there is no reason to think was the case) it must have been upheld by a very strong exertion of talents, or by collateral resources of a better stamp than this which we are speaking of. Some, who are ranked in the old class of comic writers, continued to compose for the stage, as we have already instanced; it may well be presumed that they at least droopedt he wing, and flagged under the pressure of unexperienced restraints; but if I may form a conjecture of the comparative spirit and excellence of the *Middle Comedy* from the samples and fragments of those dramatists, who properly and exclusively belong to it, I find nothing which disposes me to suspect that it had in the least declined from the merit of the first writers, but on the contrary should conceive, that it

advanced in perfection no less than it did in time by the revolution which took place.

I shall now produce some specimens of the comedies, which fall under this class, and such accounts as I have been able to collect of their authors, whom I have ranged alphabetically; the first therefore, which I shall speak of, will be the poet Alexis.

ALEXIS.

This poet was a native of Thurium in Magna Græcia, a town celebrated for being the birth-place of Herodotus; he was great uncle by the father's side to Menander, and was the first to discover and encourage the early genius of that admired writer. Alexis lived to a great age, and we have the authority of Plutarch for saying, that the vigour of his faculties was preserved to the last: "The comic poets, Alexis and Philemon," says that author, "continued to write for the stage to the latest period of their lives, and when death at length surprised them, he found them crowned with the trophies of success, and triumphing in the plaudits of the theatre." The numerous productions of our poet confirm this assertion of Plutarch, for Suidas says he was author of no less than two hundred and forty-five dramas, and I find the titles of one hundred and thirteen of this collection even now upon record; this proves that he possessed a very copious vein of invention, and the fragments, which remain out of the general wreck of his works, indicate the richness as well as copiousness of that vein. The works of such a master were of themselves a study, and as Menander formed himself upon his instructions, we cannot fail to conceive very highly of the preceptor from the acknowledged excellence of the pupil. I

discover a comedy of Alexis intitled Adelphi; it is generally supposed that Terence copied his comedy of that name from Menander, but unless his commentators have given some better reason, than I have yet met with, for the fact, it will bear a doubt at least whether that elegant copy may not have been as much indebted to the uncle as to the nephew, for the charms of its dialogue and the delicacy of its character.

Agellius informs us that Alexis formed the plot of one of his comedies upon the life and actions of Pythagoras; posterity will give him credit for his choice, as we cannot conceive a happier fable for an ingenious author to work upon, nor any that would afford a more fruitful field for facetious raillery than the extravagant and juggling tricks and contrivances, which that impostor's story teems with. Amongst his fragments I discover one little scrap, which, though a very small one, seems to have been a splinter of the wreck, wherein he ridicules a certain gluttonous Pythagorean, named Ephicharides, for evading the abstemious rule of his sect for eating nothing that has life, by swearing that his meat is killed before it is cooked; there can be no doubt but the tenour of the piece was altogether satirical, for it cannot be supposed that the same man, who lampooned Plato, would spare Pythagoras; and that he did treat Pluto in this contemptuous strain we have the word of Laertius, who refers to no less than four of his comedies, in which he ridicules him very severely; there is one short passage still remaining, which conveys a sneer at this philosopher, and so far as it goes confirms the anecdote, which Laertius gives us; but the biographer does more than the admirers of the divine Plato will thank him for, when he informs us of the

grace and comeliness of Alexis's person, and of Plato's partiality to him on that account; and amongst many other gallantries of the like nature, we find some verses addressed to Alexis, in praise of his beauty, by the enamoured philosopher, whose muse seems to have visited him pretty frequently on these occasions. There is no great point in his love-epigram to Alexis, but in that to a certain young man named Stella, who was his fellow-student in astrology, he seems to have been as extravagant in imagination, as Juliet's *conceito* of cutting Romeo *into little stars*, for I question if the whole school of Epicurus can furnish a more ridiculous start of rhapsodical bombast than the following:

"Oh! that I were that heaven on which you gaze,
To dart upon thee with a thousand rays!"

What a plunge is this for Pegasus to make with a grave philosopher on his back! Whether it was successful or not with the young star-gazer I am not curious to inquire; if he was in the humour to be tickled with nonsense, I should think such an address must have been irresistibly charming; but we may be very sure that Alexis was not so complying, and that, instead of being pleased with the flattery, he turned the flatterer into ridicule upon all occasions, first in his Meropis, again in his Ancylion, his Olympiodorus, and most of all in his celebrated comedy entitled The Parasite. Aristotle records an answer made by Alexis to an inquisitive fellow, who observed him in his latter years slowly crawling along the streets of Athens, and demanded 'what he was doing?' 'Nothing;' replied the feeble veteran, 'and of that very disease I am dying.' Stobæus has the same anecdote, and I think it unlikely for a man, who preserved so vigorous a mind, as Plutarch

says he did, to extreme old age, to be what Athenæus calls him, Ὀψοφάγος, a glutton; I conclude therefore that the Deipnosophist was in the mistake of Congreve's Jeremy, who suspected Epictetus was a real cook, whereas he only wrote receipts. I have one of these now before me from the pen of Alexis, which does not seem to speak of the Epicurean *summum bonum* with all that respect and approbation, which a glutton would naturally profess for it—This it is—

I sigh'd for ease, and, weary of my lot,
Wish'd to exchange it: in this mood I stroll'd
Up to the citadel three several days;
And there I found a bevy of preceptors
For my new system, thirty in a group;
All with one voice prepar'd to tutor me—
Eat, drink and revel in the joys of love!
For pleasure is the wise man's sovereign good.

I think it will also bear a doubt, whether a voluptuary could find in his heart to vent such irony as the following, against the great supporters of his system, harlots and procuresses; I confess it shews Alexis to have been deep in the secrets of their vocation, but a libertine in practice would be branded for a traitor, if he was to tell such tales of the academy he belonged to—He is speaking of the commodious sisterhood of procuresses—

They fly at all, and, as their funds encrease,
With fresh recruits they still augment their stock,
Moulding the young novitiate to her trade;
Form, feature, manners, every thing so chang'd,
That not a trace of former self is left.
Is the wench short? a triple sole of cork
Exalts the pigmy to a proper size.
Is she too tall of stature? a low chair
Softens the fault, and a fine easy stoop
Lowers her to standard pitch—If narrow-hipt,

A handsome wadding readily supplies
What nature stints, and all beholders cry,
See what plump haunches!—Hath the nymph perchance
A high round paunch, stuft like our comic drolls,
And strutting out foreright? a good stout busk
Pushing athwart shall force the intruder back.
Hath she red brows? a little soot will cure 'em.
Is she too black? the ceruse makes her fair:
Too pale of hue? the opal comes in aid.
Hath she a beauty out of sight? disclose it!
Strip nature bare without a blush—Fine teeth?
Let her affect one everlasting grin,
Laugh without stint—but ah! if laugh she cannot,
And her lips won't obey, take a fine twig
Of myrtle, shape it like a butcher's skewer,
And prop them open, set her on the bitt
Day after day when out of sight, till use
Grows second nature, and the pearly row,
Will she or will she not, perforce appears.

This passage I have literally rendered, and I suspect it describes the artifices of an impure toilet, with precision enough to shew that these Grecian models are not absolutely antiquated by the intervention of so many centuries. Our modern puffers in perfumery may have carried artificial complexions and Circassian bloom to a higher state of perfection; I dare say they have more elaborate means of staining carrotty eye-brows than with simple soot, and cannot think of comparing a little harmless opal with their poisonous farrago of pastes, pomatums and pearl powders; but I would have my fair and virtuous countrywomen take notice, that the substitution of stuft hips originated with the Athenian prostitutes, with this advantage on the side of good sense, that the inventors of the fashion never applied false bottoms to those, whom Nature had provided with true ones; they seem to have had a better eye for due proportion than to add to a redundancy,

because in some cases it was convenient to fill up a vacuum.

As I address this friendly hint to the plumper part of the fair sex, I shall rely upon the old proverb for their good humour, and hope they will kindly interpret it as a proof that my eye is sometimes directed to objects, which theirs cannot superintend; and as they generally agree to keep certain particulars out of sight, a real friend to decency will wish they would consent to keep them a little more out of mind also.

No. CXLIII.

We are indebted to Vitruvius for a quotation in the beginning of his sixth book, taken from one of the dramas of Alexis, to the following effect: 'Whereas all the other states of Greece compel the children of destitute parents, without exception, to provide for the support of them who begot them, we of Athens,' says the poet, 'make the law binding upon such children only, who are beholden to their parents for the blessing of a liberal education.' The proviso was certainly a wise one, and it is with justice that the poet gives his countrymen credit for being the authors of it.

Alexis in one of his comedies very appositely remarks—'that the nature of man in some respects resembles that of wine, for as fermentation is necessary to new wine, so is it also to a youthful spirit;

when that process is over, and it comes to settle and subside, we may then and not till then expect to find a permanent tranquillity.' This allusion he again takes up, probably in the same scene, though under a different character, and cries out—'I am now far advanced in the evening of life's day, and what is there in the nature of man, that I should liken it to that of wine, seeing that old age, which recommends the latter, mars the former? Old wine indeed exhilarates, but old men are miserable to themselves and others.' Antiphanes the comic poet has struck upon the same comparison, but with a different turn. 'Old age and old wine,' says he, 'may well be compared; let either of them exceed their date ever so little, and the whole turns sour.'

Julius Pollux, says that Alexis named one of his comedies Γυναικοστρατία, and there are some passages, which we may presume are reliques of this piece, of a very bitter cast, for he makes one of his female characters roundly assert:

'No animal in nature can compare
In impudence with woman; I myself
Am one, and from my own experience speak.'

I flatter myself an English audience would not hear such calumny; the modern stage encourages more respectful sentiments—

Oh! woman, lovely woman! nature made thee
To temper man; we had been brutes without thee.

Our poet must have been in an ill humour with the sex, when he wrote this comedy, or else the Athenian wives must have been mere Xantippes to deserve what follows—

'Nor house, nor coffers, nor whatever else
Is dear and precious, should be watch'd so closely,

As she whom you call wife. Sad lot is ours,
Who barter life and all its free delights,
To be the slaves of woman, and are paid
Her bridal portion in the luckless coin
Of sorrow and vexation. A man's wrath
Is milk and honey to a woman's rage;
He can be much offended and forgive.
She never pardons those she most offends:
What she should do she slights, what she should not
Hotly pursues; false to each virtuous point,
And only in her wickedness sincere.'

'Who but a lunatic would wed and be
Wilfully wretched? better to endure
The shame of poverty, and all its taunts
Rather than this. The reprobate, on whom
The Censor set his brand, is justly doom'd
Unfit to govern others, but the wretch,
Who weds, no longer can command himself,
Nor has his woe a period but in death.'

So much for matrimony, according to our author's picture of it! he has left us a description of love, which he has sketched in more pleasing colours—

'The man, who holds true pleasure to consist
In pampering his vile body, and defies
Love's great divinity, rashly maintains
Weak impious war with an immortal God.
The gravest master that the schools can boast
Ne'er train'd his pupils to such discipline,
As love his votaries, unrivall'd power,
The first great deity—and where is he,
So stubborn and determinedly stiff,
But shall at some time bend the knee to love,
And make obeisance to his mighty shrine?'
'One day as slowly sauntering from the port,
A thousand cares conflicting in my breast,
Thus I began to commune with myself—
Methinks these painters misapply their art,
And never knew the being which they draw;
For mark! their many false conceits of love.
Love is nor male nor female, man nor god,

Nor with intelligence nor yet without it,
But a strange compound of all these, uniting
In one mixt essence many opposites;
A manly courage with a woman's fear,
The madman's phrensy in a reasoning mind,
The strength of steel, the fury of a beast,
The ambition of a hero—something 'tis,
But by Minerva and the gods I swear!
I know not what this nameless something is.'

This riddling description of love I consider as a very curious fragment of the Greek comedy, as it has more play of words and less simplicity of thought and style, than I can recollect in any writer of this age and country. In general I think I can discover more antithesis in the authors of the Middle Comedy than in any others, and I take it to have been one of the consequences of parody. Phædria's picture of love in the opening scene of Terence's Eunuch, is something in the style of this fragment of Alexis, and the particular expression of *ut cum ratione insanias*, seems of a piece with—Ἡ ἄνοια μανίας ὁ δὲ λόγος φρονοῦντος. Which I have rendered—

'A madman's phrensy in a reasoning mind.'

Our Shakspeare is still closer to it, when Romeo describing love calls it

A madness most discreet.

And again—

Why then, O brawling Love! O loving Hate!
Oh! any thing of nothing first create;
Oh, heavy Lightness! serious Vanity!
Mishapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is.

Before I take leave of Alexis I shall subjoin one more passage from his remains, which conveys the

strongest marks of detestation, that language can supply, of that very vice, which Athenæus would persuade us he was addicted to; but I will never be persuaded that a glutton wrote the following lines in the face of his own example, nor would it be an easy matter to convince me, that if any glutton had the will, he would possess the wit, to write them.

'You, Sir, a Cyrenean as I take you,
Look at your sect of desperate voluptuaries;
There's Diodorus—beggary is too good for him—
A vast inheritance in two short years,
Where is it? Squander'd, vanish'd, gone for ever:
So rapid was his dissipation.———Stop!
Stop, my good friend, you cry; not quite so fast!
This man went fair and softly to his ruin;
What talk you of two years? As many days,
Two little days were long enough to finish
Young Epicharides; he had some soul,
And drove a merry pace to his undoing—
Marry! if a kind surfeit wou'd surprise us,
Ere we sit down to earn it, such prevention
Wou'd come most opportune to save the trouble
Of a sick stomach and an aching head:
But whilst the punishment is out of sight,
And the full chalice at our lips, we drink,
Drink all to-day, to-morrow fast and mourn,
Sick, and all o'er oppress with nauseous fumes;
Such is the drunkard's curse, and Hell itself
Cannot devise a greater—Oh that nature
Might quit us of this overbearing burthen,
This tyrant god, the belly! take that from us,
With all its bestial appetites, and man,
Exonerated man, shall be all soul.'

ANTIPHANES.

Antiphanes of Smyrna, or, as some will have it, of Rhodes, was born in or about Olymp. XCIII. His father's name was Demophanes, and his mother's Œnoe, people of servile degree; yet our poet,

thus ignoble in his birth, lived to signalize himself by his genius, and was held in such respect by his Athenian patrons, that a public decree was made for the removal of his remains from the isle of Chios, where he died at the age of seventy-four, and for depositing them in the city of Athens, where his funeral honours were sumptuously performed at the charge of the state.

Various accounts are given of the number of his comedies, but of all the Greek dramatists he appears to have been the most prolific, for the lowest list of his plays amounts to two hundred and ninety, and some contend that he actually composed three hundred and sixty-five, a number almost incredible if we had not the instances of Calderon and De Vega, too well authenticated to admit of a doubt in modern times, to refer to. Antiphanes bore off the prize with thirty comedies; and if these successes appear disproportioned to his attempts, yet they were brilliant, inasmuch as he had to contend with such respectable rivals. We have now no other rule whereby to measure his merit, but in the several fragments selected from his comedies by various authors of the lower ages, and these, though tolerably numerous, will scarce suffice to give such an inſight into the original, as may enable us to pronounce upon its comparative excellence with any critical precision: True it is, even these small reliques have agitated the curiosity of the learned moderns, to whom so many valuable authors are lost, but we cannot contemplate them without a sensible regret to find how few amongst them comprise any such portion of the dialogue, as to open the character, style and manners of the writer, and not often enough to furnish a conjecture at the fable they appertain to; they are like small crevices, letting in one feeble ray of light into

a capacious building; they dart occasionally upon some rich and noble part, but they cannot convey to us a full and perfect idea of the symmetry and construction of the majestic whole.

I have the titles of one hundred and four comedies under the name of this author.

No. CXLIV.

When I find the Middle Comedy abounding with invectives against women, I am tempted to think it was the æra of bad wives. Antiphanes wrote two plays of a satirical cast, one intitled *Matrimony*, and the other *The Nuptials*; we may venture to guess that the following passages have belonged to one or both of these plays—

'Ye foolish husbands, trick not out your wives;
Dress not their persons fine, but cloath their minds.
Tell 'em your secrets?—Tell 'em to the crier,
And make the market place your confidante!'—
'Nay, but there's proper penalties for blabbing'—
'What penalties! they'll drive you out of them;
Summon your children into court, convene
Relations, friends, and neighbours to confront
And nonsuit your complaint, till in the end
Justice is hooted down, and guilt prevails.'

The second is in a more animated strain of comedy.

'For this, and only this, I'll trust a woman,
That if you take life from her she will die,
And being dead she'll come to life no more;
In all things else I am an infidel.

Oh! might I never more behold a woman!
Rather than I should meet that object, Gods!
Strike out my eyes—I'll thank you for your mercy.'

We are indebted to Athenæus for part of a dialogue, in which Antiphanes has introduced a traveller to relate a whimsical contrivance, which the king of Cyprus had made use of for cooling the air of his banqueting-chamber, whilst he sate at supper.

'*A.* You say you've pass'd much of you time in Cyprus.
B. All; for the war prevented my departure.
A. In what place chiefly, may I ask?
B. In Paphos;
Where I saw elegance in such perfection,
As almost mocks belief.
A. Of what kind, pray you?
B. Take this for one—The monarch, when he sups,
Is fann'd by living doves.
A. You make me curious
How this is to be done; all other questions
I will put by to be resolv'd in this.
B. There is a juice drawn from the Carpin tree,
To which your dove instinctively is wedded
With a most loving appetite; with this
The king anoints his temples, and the odour
No sooner captivates the silly birds,
Than straight they flutter round him, nay, would fly
A bolder pitch, so strong a love-charm draws them,
And perch, O horror! on his sacred crown,
If that such prophanation were permitted
Of the by-standers, who with reverend care
Fright them away, till thus, retreating now
And now advancing, they keep such a coil
With their broad vans, and beat the lazy air
Into so quick a stir, that in the conflict
His royal lungs are comfortably cool'd,
And thus he sups as Paphian monarchs should.'

An old man in the comedy, as it should seem, of the Γηραιάδης, reasons thus—

'I grant you that an old fellow like myself, if he be a wise fellow withal, one that has seen much and learnt a great deal, may be good for something and keep a shop open for all customers, who want advice in points of difficulty. Age is as it were an altar of refuge for human distresses to fly to. Oh! longevity, coveted by all who are advancing towards thee, cursed by all who have attained thee; railed at by the wise, betrayed by them who consult thee, and well spoken of by no one.—And yet what is it we old fellows can be charged with? We are no spendthrifts, do not consume our means in gluttony, run mad for a wench, or break locks to get at her; and why then may not old age, seeing such discretion belongs to it, be allowed its pretensions to happiness?'

A servant thus rallies his master upon a species of hypocrisy natural to old age.

'Ah good my master, you may sigh for death,
And call amain upon him to release you,
But will you bid him welcome when he comes?
Not you. Old Charon, has a stubborn task
To tug you to his wherry and dislodge you
From your rich tables, when your hour is come:
I muse the Gods send not a plague amongst you,
A good, brisk, sweeping, epidemic plague:
There's nothing else can make you all immortal.'

Surely there is good comedy in this raillery of the servant—The following short passages have a very neat turn of expression in the original.

'An honest man to law makes no resort;
His conscience is the better rule of court.'

'The man, who first laid down the pedant rule,
That love is folly, was himself the fool:
For if to life that transport you deny,
What privilege is left us—but to die?'

'Cease, mourners, cease complaint, and weep no more!
Your lost friends are not dead, but gone before,
Advanced a stage or two upon that road,
Which you must travel in the steps they trode;
In the same inn we all shall meet at last,
There take new life and laugh at sorrows past.'

When I meet these and many other familiar sentiments, which these designers after nature abound in, I ask myself where originality is to be sought for; not with these poets it is clear, for their sickles are for ever in each other's corn; nor even with the founders of the Greek drama, for they all leant upon Homer, as he perhaps on others antecedent to his æra. As for the earliest writers of our own stage, the little I have read of their rude beginnings seems to be a dull mass of second-hand pedantry coarsely daubed with ribaldry: In Shakspeare you meet originality of the purest cast, a new creation, bright and beaming with unrivalled lustre; his contemporary Jonson did not seem to aim at it.

Though I have already given a Parasite from Eupolis, and compared him with Jonson's admirable Mosca, yet, I cannot refuse admission to a very pleasant, impudent fellow, who gives name to a comedy of Antiphanes, and in the following spirited apology for his life and actions, takes upon him the office of being his own historian.

'What art, vocation, trade or mystery
Can match with your fine Parasite?—The painter?
He! a mere dauber: A vile drudge the Farmer:
Their business is to labour, our's to laugh,
To jeer, to quibble, faith Sirs! and to drink,
Aye, and to drink lustily. Is not this rare?
'Tis life, my life at least: the first of pleasures
Were to be rich myself; but next to this
I hold it best to be a Parasite,
And feed upon the rich. Now mark me right!

Set down my virtues one by one: imprimis,
Good-will to all men—Would they were all rich
So might I gull them all: malice to none;
I envy no man's fortune, all I wish
Is but to share it: would you have a friend,
A gallant steady friend? I am your man:
No striker I, no swaggerer, no defamer,
But one to bear all these and still forbear:
If you insult, I laugh, unruffled, merry,
Invincibly good-humour'd still I laugh:
A stout good soldier I, valorous to a fault,
When once my stomach's up and supper serv'd:
You know my humour, not one spark of pride,
Such and the same for ever to my friends:
If cudgell'd, molten iron to the hammer
Is not so malleable; but if I cudgel,
Bold as the thunder: is one to be blinded?
I am the lightning's flash: to be puff'd up,
I am the wind to blow him to the bursting:
Choak'd, strangled?—I can do't and save a halter:
Would you break down his doors? Behold an earthquake:
Open and enter them?—A battering-ram:
Will you sit down to supper? I'm your guest,
Your very *Fly* to enter without bidding:
Would you move off? You'll move a well as soon:
I'm for all work, and tho' the job were stabbing,
Betraying, false-accusing, only say
Do this, and it is done! I stick at nothing;
They call me Thunder-bolt for my dispatch;
Friend of my friends am I: Let actions speak me;
I'm much too modest to commend myself.'

I must consider this fragment as a very striking specimen of the author, and the only licence I have used is to tack together two separate extracts from the same original, which meet in the break of the tenth line, and so appositely that it is highly probable they both belong to the same speech; more than probable to the same comedy and character. Lucian's Parasite seems much beholden to this of Antiphanes.

Antiphanes was on a certain occasion commanded to read one of his comedies in the presence of Alexander the Great; he had the mortification to find that the play did not please the royal critic; the moment was painful, but the poet addressing the monarch as follows, ingeniously contrived to vindicate his own production, at the same time he was passing a courtly compliment to the prince, at whose command he read it—'I cannot wonder, O king! that you disapprove of my comedy; for he, who could be entertained by it, must have been present at the scenes it represents; he must be acquainted with the vulgar humours of our public ordinaries, have been familiar with the impure manners of our courtesans, a party in the beating-up of many a brothel, and a sufferer as well as an actor in those unseemly frays and riots: Of all these things, you, Great Sir! are not informed, and the fault lies more in my presumption for intruding them upon your hearing, than in any want of fidelity with which I have described them.'

No. CXLV.

ANAXANDRIDES.

ANAXANDRIDES of Rhodes, son of Anaxander, was author of sixty-five comedies, with ten of which he bore away the prizes from his competitors. Nature bestowed upon this poet not only a fine genius, but a most beautiful person; his stature was of the tallest, his air elegant and engaging, and, whilst he affected an effeminate delicacy in his habit and appearance, he was a victim to the most violent and uncontroulable passions, which, whenever he was disappointed of the prize he contended for, were vented upon every person and thing that fell in his way, not excepting even his own unfortunate dramas, which he would tear in pieces and scatter amongst the mob, or at other times devote them to the most ignominious uses he could devise: Of these he would preserve no copy, and thus it came to pass that many admirable comedies were actually destroyed and lost to posterity. His dress was splendid and extravagant in the extreme, being of the finest purple richly fringed with gold, and his hair was not coiled up in the Athenian fashion, but suffered to fall over his shoulders at its full length: his muse was no less wanton and voluptuous than his manners, for it is recorded of him, that he was the first comic poet, who ventured to introduce upon the scene incidents of the grossest intrigue: he was not only severe upon Plato

and the Academy, but attacked the magistracy of Athens, charging them with the depravity of their lives in so daring and contemptuous a style, that they brought him to trial, and by one of the most cruel sentences upon record condemned the unhappy poet to be starved to death.

Zarottus and some other commentators upon Ovid interpret that distich in his *Ibis* to allude to Anaxandrides, where he says, ver. 525-6.

Utve parum stabili qui carmine læsit Athenas,
Invisus pereas deficiente cibo.

'Or meet the libeller's unpitied fate,
Starv'd for traducing the Athenian state.'

I know this interpretation of Zarottus is controverted upon the authority of Pausanias, and Ovid is supposed by some to point at Mævius, by others at Hipponax; but as the name of the sufferer is not given, those, who incline to the construction of Eustathius as well as Zarottus, will apply it to our author.

Of the titles of his comedies eight and twenty remain, but for his fragments, which are few in number, I discover none which seem to merit a translation; had he spared those which his passion destroyed, happy chance might perhaps have rescued something worth our notice.

ARISTOPHON.

This poet has left us more and better remembrancers of his muse, though fewer of his history: that he was a writer of the Middle Comedy is all I can collect, which personally concerns him: the titles of four of his comedies are in my hands, but though

Plutarch, Athenæus, Laertius, in his Pythagoras, Stobæus and Gyraldus all make mention of his name, none of them have given us any anecdotes of his history.

Love and matrimony, which are subjects little touched upon by the writers of the Old Comedy, became important personages in the Middle Drama; the former seems to have opened a very flowery field to fancy, the last appears generally to have been set up as the butt of ridicule and invective.—Our author for instance tells us—

'A man may marry once without a crime,
But curst is he, who weds a second time.'

On the topic of love he is more playful and ingenious—

'Love, the disturber of the peace of heaven,
And grand fomenter of Olympian feuds,
Was banish'd from the synod of the Gods:
They drove him down to earth at the expence
Of us poor mortals, and curtail'd his wings
To spoil his soaring and secure themselves
From his annoyance—Selfish, hard decree!
For ever since he roams th' unquiet world,
The tyrant and despoiler of mankind.'

There is a fragment of his comedy of the Pythagorista, in which he ridicules that philosopher's pretended visit to the regions of the dead—

'I've heard this arrogant impostor tell,
Amongst the wonders which he saw in hell,
That Pluto with his scholars sate and fed,
Singling them out from the inferior dead:
Good faith! the monarch was not over-nice,
Thus to take up with beggary and lice.'

In another passage of the same satirical comedy he thus humorously describes the disciples of Pythagoras—

'So gaunt they seem, that famine never made
Of lank Philippides so mere a shade;
Of salted tunny-fish their scanty dole,
Their beverage, like the frog's, a standing pool,
With now and then a cabbage, at the best
The leavings of the caterpillar's feast:
No comb approaches their dishevell'd hair
To rout the long-establish'd myriads there;
On the bare ground their bed, nor do they know
A warmer coverlid than serves the crow;
Flames the meridian sun without a cloud?
They bask like grasshoppers and chirp as loud:
With oil they never even feast their eyes;
The luxury of stockings they despise,
But bare-foot as the crane still march along
All night in chorus with the screech-owl's song."

Of Axionicus the comic poet I have nothing to relate, but that he was a writer of reputation in the period we are describing, and that we have the titles of six of his comedies, with a small parcel of uninteresting fragments, chiefly to be found in Athenæus.

Bathon I must also pass over like the former, no records of his history, and only a few fragments of his comedies, with three of their titles, remaining.

Though I class Chæremon amongst the writers of the Middle Comedy, I have some doubt if he should not have been in the list of Old Dramatists, being said to have been the scholar of Socrates: he is celebrated by Aristotle, Athenæus, Suidas, Stobæus, Theophrastus and others, and the titles of nine of his comedies are preserved in those authors, with some scraps of his dialogue. Aristotle relates that in his comedy of The Hippocentaur he intro-

duced a rhapsody, in which he contrived to mix every species of metre, inventing, as it should seem, a characteristic measure for a compound monster out of nature.

Of CLEARCHUS we have a few fragments, and the titles of three comedies preserved by Athenæus; the same author gives us the title of one comedy by CRITON, of four by CROBYLUS, and of two by DEMOXENUS, one of which is The Self-Tormentor, or Heautontimorumenos; this poet was an Athenian born, and seems to have been a voluminous writer. Of DEMETRIUS there remains only one fragment, yet we have testimony of his having been a comic poet of this period of great reputation.

DIODORUS was a native of Sinope, a city of Pontus, and the birth-place of many eminent poets and philosophers; we have the titles of three of his comedies, and from the few fragments of his works now existing I have selected these which follow—

'This is my rule, and to this rule I'll hold,
To chuse my wife by merit not by gold;
For on that one election must depend
Whether I wed a fury or a friend.'

'When your foe dies let all resentment cease,
Make peace with death, and death shall give you peace.'

I meet with another fragment of this author, which is so far curious, as it contains a bold blasphemy against the supreme of the heathen deities, and marks the very loose hold, which the established religion had upon the minds of the common people of Athens at this period, who must have been wonderfully changed by the new philosophy from the times of Æschylus and Aristophanes, who both incurred their resentment in a very high degree for daring to affront

the gods, though it is probable neither went the length of Diodorus's parasite, who asserts the superior dignity, authority, and even divinity of his vocation with the following hardy allusion to Jupiter himself—'All other arts,' says he, 'have been of man's invention without the help of the gods, but Jupiter himself who is our partner in the trade, first taught us how to play the parasite, and he without dispute is of all gods the greatest. 'Tis his custom to make himself welcome in every house he enters, rich or poor, no matter which; wherever he finds the dinner-table neatly spread, the couches ready set, and all things in decent order, down sits he without ceremony; eats, drinks and makes merry, and all at free cost, cajoling his poor host; and in the end when he has filled his belly and bilked his club, coolly walks home at his leisure.'

Dionysius the comic poet was also a native of Sinope, the countryman as well as contemporary of Diodorus. I have nothing but a short sentence from this author, which conveys an excellent maxim so neatly turned, that I shall set it down in the original—

Ἢ λέγε τι σιγῆς κρεῖττον, ἢ σιγὴν ἔχε.

'Either say something better than nothing, or say nothing.'

The noted tyrant of Sicily of the above name was also a writer both of tragedy and comedy.

Ephippus, a writer of comedy in this period, was a native of Athens, and one of the most celebrated poets of his age; we have the titles of twelve of his comedies, of all which that entitled Philyra was the most admired; this Philyra was the mother of Chiron the Centaur.

No. CXLVI.

EPICRATES.

EPICRATES was a native of the city of Ambrasia, the capital of Epirus; his reputation is high amongst the writers of the class under our present review; he was somewhat junior in point of time to Antiphanes before mentioned, and, if we are to give credit to Athenæus, was an imitator of that poet's manner; it is said that he went so far as to copy certain passages out of his comedies and introduce them into his own. Five of his comedies are named, and the following remnant of a dialogue ridicules the frivolous disquisitions of the Academy in so pleasant a style of comic irony, that I think myself happy in the discovery of it. The learned reader will acknowledge a striking similitude in the manner to Aristophanes's remarks upon the occupations of Socrates's scholars in the comedy of The Clouds.

'*A.* I pray you, Sir, (for I perceive you learn'd
In these grave matters) let my ignorance suck
Some profit from your courtesy, and tell me
What are you wise philosophers engaged in,
Your Plato, Menedemus and Speusippus?
What mighty mysteries have they in projection!
What new discoveries may the world expect
From their profound researches? I conjure you,
By Earth, our common mother, to impart them!

B. Sir, you shall know at our great festival
I was myself their hearer, and so much
As I there heard will presently disclose,
So you will give it ears, for I must speak
Of things perchance surpassing your belief,
So strange they will appear; but so it happened,
That these most sage Academicians sate
In solemn consultation—on a cabbage.
A. A cabbage! what did they discover there?
B. Oh sir! your cabbage hath its sex and gender,
Its provinces prerogatives and ranks,
And, nicely handled, breeds as many questions
As it does maggots. All the younger fry
Stood dumb with expectation and respect,
Wond'ring what this same cabbage should bring forth:
The Lecturer ey'd them round, whereat a youth
Took heart, and breaking first the awful silence,
Humbly crav'd leave to think—that it was round:
The cause was now at issue, and a second
Opin'd it was an herb—A third conceiv'd
With due submission it might be a plant—
The difference methought was such, that each
Might keep his own opinion and be right;
But soon a bolder voice broke up the council,
And, stepping forward, a Sicilian quack
Told them their question was abuse of time,
It was a cabbage, neither more nor less,
And they were fools to prate so much about it—
Insolent wretch! amazement seiz'd the troop,
Clamour and wrath and tumult rag'd amain,
Till Plato, trembling for his own philosophy,
And calmly praying patience of the court,
Took up the cabbage and adjourned the cause.'

ERIPHUS was also a writer of the Middle Comedy, and like the poet last reviewed is charged by Athenæus with being a copyist of Antiphanes. Three small fragments, and the titles of three plays, are every thing which now remains of this author.

EUBULUS.

Eubulus, the son of Euphranor, and a native of Atarna in Lesbos, ranks with the most celebrated poets of this æra, and though Suidas enumerates only four and twenty of his comedies, Athenæus contends that he was the author of fifty, and the names of all these are still upon the list. He flourished in Olymp. CI, which is so high in the period now under review as to make it matter of doubt whether the Old Comedy has not a joint claim to his productions with the Middle: Ammonius however expressly classes Eubulus amongst the latter, and quotes his comedy of The Cup Bearers; it is from this very comedy, as it should seem, that the famous passage was taken, in which he introduced Bacchus in person laying down to mankind these temperate and moral rules against the abuse of his blessings—

> Three cups of wine a prudent man may take;
> The first of these for constitution's sake;
> The second to the girl he loves the best;
> The third and last to lull him to his rest,
> Then home to bed! but if a fourth he pours,
> That is the cup of folly and not ours;
> Loud noisy talking on the fifth attends;
> The sixth breeds feuds and falling-out of friends;
> Seven beget blows and faces stain'd with gore;
> Eight, and the watch-patrole breaks ope the door;
> Mad with the ninth, another cup goes round,
> And the swill'd sot drops senseless to the ground.'

When such maxims of moderation proceed from the mouth of Bacchus, it argues great impiety in his votaries not to obey them.

The most elegant epigrammatist might be proud to father the following ingenious turn upon the emblem of Love, addressed to a painter—

Why, foolish painter, give those wings to love?
Love is not light, as my sad heart can prove:
Love hath no wings, or none that I can see;
If he can fly!—oh! bid him fly from me!'

EUPHRON.

Euphron is another poet of our Middle list, and one whose fame has outlived the works on which it was founded. Six of his comedies only have bequeathed their names to us, and a very scanty portion of their contents. One of these was intitled Adelphi, another claimant perhaps upon Terence. Athenæus and Stobæus, (thanks to their passion for quotations and fragments!) have favoured us with a few small reliques.—There is something in the following distich of a melancholy and touching simplicity—

Tell me, all-judging Jove, if this be fair
To make so short a life so full of care?

What next ensues I recommend to the gentlemen, who amuse themselves with cutting out work for Doctors-Commons:

Hence, vile adulterer, I scorn to gain
Pleasures extorted from another's pain!

The antients had a notion, that a man, who took no care of his own affairs, was not the fittest person in the world to be entrusted with those of others; writers for the stage must make the most of vulgar errors, whilst they are in fashion, and this may have betrayed our poet into a sentiment, which modern wits will not give him much credit for—

Let not his fingers touch the public chest,
Who by his own profusion is distrest;

For long long years of care it needs must take
To heal those wounds, which one short hour will make.

I think the reader will acknowledge a very spirited and striking turn of thought in this short apostrophe:

Wretch! find new gods to witness to new lies,
Thy perjuries have made the old too wise!

HENIOCHUS.

Heniochus, the author of a numerous collection of comedies, was born at Athens, a writer of a grave sententious cast, and one, who scrupled not to give a personal name to one of his comedies, written professedly against the character of Thorucion, a certain military prefect in those times, and a notorious traitor to his country. The titles of fifteen comedies are upon the list of this poet's works; from one of these a curious fragment has been saved, and though it seems rather of a political than a dramatic complexion, I think its good sense is sufficient to recommend it to a place in this collection.

'I will enumerate to you several cities, which in the course of time have fallen into egregious folly and declension: You may demand why I instance them at this time and in this place—I answer, that we are now present in the city of Olympia, and you may figure to yourself a kind of Pythian solemnity in the scene before us—Granted! you'll say, and what then?—Why then I may conceive these several cities here assembled by their representatives for the purpose of celebrating their redemption from slavery by solemn sacrifices to the Genius of Liberty: This performed, they deliver themselves over to be governed at the discretion of two certain female personages, whom I shall name to you—the one De-

mocracy, Aristocracy the other—From this fatal moment universal anarchy and misrule inevitably fall upon those cities, and they are lost.'

MNESIMACHUS.

This poet is recorded by Ælian and Athenæus, and by the samples we have of his comedy, few as they are, we may see that he was a minute describer of the familiar manner and characters of the age he lived in: I take him to have been a writer of a peculiar cast, a dealer in low and loquacious dialogue, a strong coarse colourist, and one, who, if time had spared his works, would probably have imparted to us more of the *Costuma*, as it is called, than any of his contemporaries: I persuade myself that the samples I am about to produce will justify these surmises with respect to Mnesimachus.

Johnson could not describe, nor Mortimer delineate, a company of banditti or bravos at their meal in bolder caricature, than what the following sketch displays:

Dost know whom thou'rt to sup with, friend?—I'll tell thee;
With gladiators, not with peaceful guests;
Instead of knives we're arm'd with naked swords,
And swallow firebrands in the place of food:
Daggers of Crete are serv'd us for confections,
And for a plate of pease a fricassee
Of shatter'd spears: the cushions we repose on
Are shields and breast-plates, at our feet a pile
Of slings and arrows, and our foreheads wreath'd
With military ensigns, not with myrtle.

There remains a very curious fragment of a dialogue between a master and his slave, which lays open to the reader the whole catalogue of an Athenian fish-market, and after all the pains it has occasioned me

in the decyphering, leaves me under the necessity of setting down a few of the articles in their original names, not being able to find any lexicon or grammarian in the humour to help me out of my difficulty.

'*Master.* Harkye, fellow! make the best of your way to Phidon's riding-school (your road lies through the cypress-grove burying-place to the forum by the public baths, where our tribunes hold their meetings) and tell those pretty gentlemen, who are there at their exercises of vaulting on their horses and off their horses (you know well enough whom I mean) tell 'em I say that their supper is grown cold, their liquor hot, their pastry dry, their bread stale, their roast done to powder, their salt-meat stript from the very bones, their tripes, chitterlings, sausages and stuft-puddings mangled and devoured by guests, who are before hand with 'em: the glass has gone round, and the wine is nearly out; the company are at their frolicks, and the house thrown out of windows—Now mark and remember every syllable I have said to you—Dost yawn, rascal?—Let me hear if you can repeat the message I have given you.

'*Servant.* From the first word to the last, as you shall witness.—I am to bid those sparks come home and not loiter till the cook makes plunder of the broken victuals; I am to say the boil'd and the roast are ready; I am to reckon up their bill of fare, their onions, olives, garlick, coleworts, gourds, beans, lettuce, knot-grass; their salted tunny-fish, their shad, sturgeon, soals, conger, purple-fish and black-fish, (both whole ones) their anchovy, mackarel, fresh tunny, gudgeons, rock-fish, dog-fish tails, cramp-fish, frog-fish, perch, baccalao, sardin, sea-weed-fish, sea-urchin, surmullet, cuckow-fish, pas-

tinaca, lamprey, barbel, grey-mullet, *Lebias*, *Sparus*, char, Ælian fish, Thracian fish, swallow-fish, prawns, calamary, flounder, shrimps, polypody, cuttle-fish, *Orphus*, lobster, crab, bleak, needle-fish, sprats, sea-scorpion and grigg—I am to put them in mind of their roasts without number, of their goose, pork, beef, lamb, mutton, goat, kid, pullett, duck, swan, partridge, bergander, and a thousand more—I am to warn them that their messmates are already fast by the teeth, chewing, gnawing, cutting, carving, boiling, roasting, laughing, playing, dancing, junketting, drinking, mobbing, scuffling, boxing, battling,—that the pipers are at their sport; every body singing, chorussing, clamouring, whilst the house smoaks with the odours of cinnamon, frankincense, myrrh, sweet-cane, storax, aloes, ambergrise, musk, camphire, cassia, and a flood of all other exquisite perfumes.'

No. CXLVII.

MOSCHION.

Moschion stands upon the authority of Clemens Alexandrinus and Stobæus, as a writer of the Middle Comedy, and a dramatist of a very moral and pathetic turn; his fragments fully verify that character. A person in one of his dramas relates the following melancholy circumstance:

'I met a lamentable example of fortune's instability—A prince of Argos begging his bread—The man, a while ago so celebrated for his great talents, high birth, and exalted rank, was now reduced to the lowest state of human wretchedness, an object of commiseration to every body who beheld him: Such of us as reached out the hand to him, or consoled him with the words of pity for his miserable condition, could not leave him without abundance of tears; surely such a dismal revolution of worldly fortune can never be contemplated but with sympathy and condolence.'

The tender and religious sentiments conveyed in the next fragment, which we owe to Clemens, certainly demand a place of honour, (was such honour in my power to bestow) in this collection.

Let the earth cover and protect its dead!
And let man's breath thither return in peace
From whence it came; his spirit to the skies,
His body to the clay of which 'twas form'd,

Imparted to him as a loan for life,
Which he and all must render back again
To earth, the common mother of mankind.

Again, in a strain yet more elevated—

Wound not the soul of a departed man!
'Tis impious cruelty; let justice strike
The living, but in mercy spare the dead.
And why pursue a shadow that is past?
Why slander the deaf earth, that cannot hear,
The dumb that cannot utter? When the soul
No longer takes account of human wrongs,
Nor joys nor sorrows touch the mouldering heart,
As well you may give feeling to the tomb,
As what it covers—both alike defy you.

NICOSTRATUS comes next under our review, a poet in his class of great reputation, as Athenæus, Suidas, Laertius and others testify. His comedies were found after his death in a chest, where they had been long missing and much regretted; we have to the amount of fourteen of their titles, and are further informed that he was so excellent an actor, that it became a proverb of honour to pronounce upon any capital performer, that *He played in the style of Nicostratus*. It is with regret I discover nothing in the few small fragments of this author and actor worth translating; however, that I may not pass over his remains without the grateful ceremony of bestowing one small tribute to his memory, I have rendered this short epigrammatic distich into our language—

If this incessant chattering be your plan,
I would ye were a swallow, not a man!

The talents of the greatest actor at best can survive him by tradition only, but when Nature to those rare attributes adds the gift of a poetic genius,

it gives a double poignancy to our regret, that time should not have left a relique even of these more considerable than the above.

Of PHILIPPUS the comic poet I have no anecdotes to record, and nothing but the names of three comedies to refer to.

PHŒNICIDES.

We are beholden to this poet for a very pleasant narrative made by a lady of easy virtue, in which she describes certain of her keepers with a great deal of comic humour, and it is humour of a sort, that has not evaporated by the intervention of twenty centuries; she was tired of her trade, and therefore, though the theme be a loose one, the moral of it is good: the lady is in conversation with a man named Pythias, but whether the friend of Damon the Pythagorean, or some other, does not appear: the noble professions of arms, physic, and philosophy had taken their turns in her good graces, but for the credit they gained by the account, I think it is pretty equally divided amongst them—

So help me, Venus! as I'm fairly sick,
Sick to the soul, my Pythias, of this trade:—
No more on't! I'll be no man's mistress, I:
Don't talk to me of Destiny; I've done with't;
I'll hear no prophecies—for mark me well—
No sooner did I buckle to this business,
Than straight behold a Man of War assail'd me—
He told me of his battles o'er and o'er,
Shew'd me good stock of scars, but none of cash,
No, not a doit—but still he vapour'd much
Of what a certain prince would do, and talk'd
Of this and that commission—in the clouds,
By which he gull'd me of a twelvemonth's hope,
Liv'd at free cost, and fed me upon love.
At length I sent my man of valour packing,

And a grave son of Physic fill'd his place:
My house now seem'd an hospital of Lazars,
And the vile beggar mangled without mercy,
A very hangman bath'd in human gore.
My soldier was a prince compar'd to this,
For his were merry fibs; this son of death
Turn'd every thing he touch'd into a corpse.
When Fortune, who had yet good store of spite,
Now coupled me to a most learn'd Philosopher;
Plenty of beard he had, a cloak withal,
Enough to spare of each, and moral maxims
More than I could digest, but money—none;
His sect abhorr'd it; 'twas a thing proscrib'd
By his philosophy, an evil root,
And when I ask'd him for a taste, 'twas poison;
Still I demanded it, and for the reason
That he so slightly priz'd it—all in vain—
I could not wring a drachma from his clutches—
Defend me, Heaven! from all philosophers!

SOTADES.

Sotades was a native Athenian, an elegant writer, and in great favour with the theatre. I shall present the reader with one of his fragments, which will be a strong contrast to the foregoing one, and which seems to prove, amongst many other instances, how much the grave and sentimental comedy now began to be in fashion with the Athenians.

Is there a man just, honest, nobly born?—
Malice should hunt him down. Does wealth attend him?
Trouble is hard behind—Conscience direct?—
Beggary is at his heels: is he an Artist?—
Farewell, repose! An equal upright Judge?—
Report shall blast his virtues: is he strong?—
Sickness shall sap his strength; account that day,
Which brings no new mischance, a day of rest;
For what is man? what matter is he made of?
How born? what is he and what shall he be?
What an unnatural parent is this world,

To foster none but villains, and destroy
All, who are benefactors to mankind!
What was the fate of Socrates?—A prison,
A dose of poison; tried, condemn'd and kill'd:
How died Diogenes? As a dog dies,
With a raw morsel in his hungry throat:
Alas for Æschylus! musing he walk'd,
The soaring eagle dropt a tortoise down,
And crush'd that brain where Tragedy had birth:
A paltry grape-stone choak'd the Athenian Bee:
Mastiffs of Thrace devour'd Euripides,
And god-like Homer, woe the while! was starv'd—
Thus life, blind life teems with perpetual woes.

There is a melancholy grandeur in these sentiments with a simplicity of expression, which prove to us that these authors occasionally digressed from the gay spirit of comedy into passages not only of the most serious, but sublimest cast; and I am persuaded this specimen of the poet Sotades, notwithstanding the disadvantages of translation, will strike the reader as an instance in point. Where but one fragment is to be found of a writer's works, and that one of so elevated a character, must it not impress the mind with a deep regret to think how many noble strains of poetry, how many elegant and brilliant turns of wit these compositions would have furnished, had they come down to us entire? and may I not flatter myself that as many as feel this regret, will look with candour upon these attempts?

STRATON.

This poet supplies us with the names of two comedies and the small bequest of one fragment; it is however an acceptable one, being interesting as recounting part of a dialogue, which to a certain degree gives some display of character, and also as being of a facetious, comic cast in the character of fa-

miliar life. The speaker is some master of a family, who is complaining to his companion in the scene of the whimsical, conceited humour of his cook—

I've harbour'd a He-Sphinx and not a Cook,
For by the Gods he talk'd to me in riddles
And coin'd new words that pose me to interpret.
No sooner had he enter'd on his office,
Than, eyeing me from head to foot, he cries—
'How many mortals hast thou bid to supper?'
Mortals! quoth I, what tell you me of mortals?
Let Jove decide on their mortality;
You're crazy sure! none by that name are bidden.
'No Table-Usher? no one to officiate
As Master of the Courses?'—No such person;
Moschion and Niceratus and Philinus,
These are my guests and friends, and amongst these
You'll find no table-decker as I take it.
'Gods! is it possible?' cried he: Most certain,
I patiently replied; he swell'd and huff'd,
As if forsooth I had done him heinous wrong,
And robb'd him of his proper dignity;
Ridiculous conceit!—'What offering mak'st thou
To Erysichthon?' he demanded: None—
'Shall not the wide-horn'd ox be fell'd?' cries he;
I sacrifice no ox—'Nor yet a wether?'
Not I, by Jove; a simple sheep perhaps:
'And what's a wether but a sheep?' cries he.
I'm a plain man, my friend, and therefore speak
Plain language:—'What! I speak as Homer does;
And sure a cook may use like privilege
And more than a blind poet'—Not with me;
I'll have no kitchen Homers in my house!
So pray discharge yourself!—This said, we parted.

No. CXLVIII.

THEOPHILUS.

The fragments of this poet supply me with a passage upon the fertile subject of love, which is of a very lively cast, and in a miscellaneous collection like this certainly deserves to be received as one of the beauties of the Greek stage—

If love be folly as the schools wou'd prove,
The man must lose his wits who falls in love;
Deny him love, you doom the wretch to death,
And then it follows he must lose his breath.
Good sooth! there is a young and dainty maid
I dearly love, a minstrel she by trade;
What then? must I defer to pedant rule,
And own that love transforms me to a fool?
Not I, so help me! By the Gods I swear,
The nymph I love is fairest of the fair!
Wise, witty, dearer to her poet's sight,
Than piles of money on an author's night;
Must I not love her, then? Let the dull sot,
Who made the law, obey it! I will not.

We have the names of seven comedies ascribed to this author.

TIMOCLES.

Of this name we have two comic poets upon record, one of whom was an Athenian born, and to him Suidas ascribes six comedies; of the other's birth-place we have no account, but of his plays we

have eleven titles, and the fragments of both are quoted indiscriminately: amongst these I have selected one which is so far matter of curiosity as it gives some description of the illustrious orator Demosthenes—

Bid me say any thing rather than this;
But on this theme Demosthenes himself
Shall sooner check the torrent of his speech
Than I—Demosthenes! that angry orator,
That bold Briareus, whose tremendous throat,
Charg'd to the teeth with battering-rams and spears,
Beats down opposers; brief in speech was he,
But, crost in argument, his threat'ning eyes
Flash'd fire, whilst thunder vollied from his lips.

To one of the poets of the name of Timocles, but to which I know not, we are also indebted for a complimentary allusion to the powers of Tragedy; it is the only instance of the sort, which the Greek Comedy now furnishes, and I am gratified by the discovery, not only for the intrinsic merit of the passage, but for the handsome tribute which it pays to the moral uses of the tragic drama.

Nay, my good friend, but hear me, I confess
Man is the child of sorrow, and this world,
In which we breathe, hath cares enough to plague us,
But it hath means withal to sooth these cares,
And he, who meditates on other's woes,
Shall in that meditation lose his own:
Call then the tragic poet to your aid,
Hear him, and take instruction from the stage;
Let Telephus appear; behold a prince,
A spectacle of poverty and pain,
Wretched in both.—And what if you are poor?
Are you a demi-god? are you the son
Of Hercules? begone! complain no more.
Doth your mind struggle with distracting thoughts?
Do your wits wander? are you mad? Alas!
So was Alcmæon, whilst the world ador'd
His father as their God. Your eyes are dim;

What then? the eyes of Œdipus were dark,
Totally dark. You mourn a son; he's dead;
Turn to the tale of Niobe for comfort,
And match your loss with her's You're lame of foot;
Compare it with the foot of Philoctetes,
And make no more complaint. But you are old,
Old and unfortunate; consult Oëneus;
Hear what a king endur'd, and learn content:
Sum up your miseries, number up your sighs,
The tragic stage shall give you tear for tear,
And wash out all afflictions but its own.

With the poet XENARCHUS, author of eight dramas, I conclude my catalogue of the writers of the Middle Comedy; one short but spirited apostrophe I collect from this poet, and offer it in its naturalized state as a small remembrance of my zeal to catch at every relique of his shipwrecked muse.

Ah faithless women! when you swear
I register your oaths in air.

I have now produced a list of comic poets, thirty-two in number, who were celebrated writers for the Athenian stage within the period we have been reviewing, and in these translations the reader has before him every thing that time has spared of their productions except a few short and insignificant sentences, which had nothing to recommend them: the imperfect anecdotes here given of the several authors may be thought to contain very little interesting matter, but it has been no slight task to collect even these, and I am persuaded that my search has left nothing behind, which can give any further elucidation to the subject; if I were as secure of not having trespassed upon the public patience through too much diligence and minuteness, I should dismiss my anxiety.

The period of the Middle Comedy was of short duration, and thirty-two comic authors are no inconsiderable number to have flourished within that æra; yet we may well suppose others, and probably many others, did exist within the time, of whom no memorial whatever now survives: most of these names, which I have now for the first time brought together, will I dare say be new even to my learned readers, for not many men of a studious turn, and fewer still of classical taste, will dedicate their time to those dry and deterring books, in which these scattered reliques were deposited, and on which they have hitherto depended for their almost desperate chance of being rescued from extinction. I mention this not ostentatiously, as taking credit on the score of industry and discovery, but hoping, that the labour of the task will be some apology on my behalf to such of my readers (if any such to my sorrow shall be found) who, having purchased these volumes with an eye to amusement only, may have been tired by the perusal of these papers, or, not caring to peruse them, have been cashiered of the just proportions of a volume.

To the candour of those monthly publications which are concerned in the review of new books, I profess myself to be very highly indebted; that they have admitted and commended the sincere and moral motives of my undertaking, is above measure gratifying to me; in this particular I know I have a just claim to their good report, because they cannot credit me for more real love to mankind and more cordial zeal for their social interests, than I truly have at heart, but for my success as an author, (which has so much exceeded my expectations) I cannot deceive myself so far as to ascribe it wholly to my own merits, when I must know how great a

share of it was the natural result of their recommending me to the world.

As I have not found any hints in these Reviews, nor in the reports which have come home to me, that have tended to discourage me in the prosecution of these researches into the characters and remains of the Greek dramatists, I have gone on with ardour, and shall go on, if life is granted me, to the end; the writers therefore of The New Comedy will come next under my review, and as we descend in time, we shall increase in matter; the celebrated names of Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Apollodorus, and some few besides, are not wholly left without record; every fragment that bears their stamp has been accounted so venerable, that some of the greatest scholars of modern times have thought it an office of honour to be employed in the collection of them; none of these however have found their way into our language, and as I flatter myself these of the Middle Comedy have risen upon their predecessors, I hope what is next to follow will not baulk the climax; my best care and fidelity shall be applied to the translations of such as I shall select for the purpose, and as I have generally found the simplicity of their style and sentiment accord best to the easy metre of our old English dramatists, I shall mostly endeavour to clothe them in the dress of those days, when Jonson, Fletcher, and Massinger supported the stage. To these I shall probably add some selections from Aristophanes, which I would not insert in their place, being aware that extracts upon a large scale would comparatively have extinguished their contemporaries, when set beside them upon a very contracted one.

Upon the whole, it will be my ambition to give to the world what has never yet been attempted, a

compleat collection of the beauties of the Greek stage in our own language from the remains of more than fifty comic poets.

No. CXLIX.

NOTHING now remains for compleating the literary annals of Greece, according to the plan I have proceeded upon, but to give some account of the Drama within that period of time, which commences with the death of Alexander of Macedon, and concludes with that of Menander, or at most extends to a very few years beyond it, when the curtain may figuratively be said to have dropt upon all the glories of the Athenian stage.

This, though the last, is yet a brilliant æra, for now flourished Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Apollodorus, Philippides, Posidippus; poets no less celebrated for the luxuriancy than for the elegance of their genius; all writers of the New Comedy; which, if it had not all the wit and fire of the old satirical drama produced in times of greater public freedom, is generally reputed to have been far superior to it in delicacy, regularity and decorum. All attacks upon living characters ceased with what is properly denominated the Old Comedy; the writers of the Middle Class contented themselves with venting their raillery upon the works of their dramatic predecessors; the persons and politics of their contemporaries were safe; whereas neither the

highest station, nor the brightest talents were any sure protection from the unrestrained invectives of the comic muse in her earliest sallies.

The poets under our present review were not, however, so closely circumscribed, as to be afraid of indulging their talent for ridicule and satire upon topics of a general nature; without a latitude like this comedy could hardly have existed; but this was not all, for amongst their fragments some are to be found, which advance sentiments and opinions so directly in the teeth of the popular religion, that we cannot but admire at the extraordinary toleration of their pagan audiences. Justin quotes a passage from Menander's comedy of *The Charioteer*, in which an old mendicant is introduced carrying about a painted figure of the Great Mother of the Gods, after the manner of the present Popish Rosaries, and begging a boon as usual on those occasions; the person addressed for his subscription, contemptuously replies, 'I have no relish for such deities as stroll about with an old beggar-woman from door to door, nor for that painted cloth you have the impudence to thrust into my presence: let me tell you, woman, if your Mother of the Gods was good for any thing, she would keep to her own station, and take charge of none but those, who merit her protection by their piety and devotion.' This rebuff is of a piece with the surly answer of the cynic Antisthenes, recorded by Clemens Alexandrinus, when, being teazed by these mendicants, the philosopher replied—'Let the Gods provide for their own Mother; I am not bound to maintain her.' In another fragment, quoted both by Clemens and Eusebius, Menander breaks forth into a bolder rhapsody, which breathes the spirit and nearly the very words of the Hebrew prophets: a person (in what drama does not appear) addresses

his companion in the scene to this effect—'If any man, O Pamphilus, thinks that God will be well pleased with the sacrifice of multitudes of oxen or of goats, or of any other victims; or by robing his images in cloth of gold and purple, and decking them out with ivory and emeralds; that man deceives himself, and his imaginations are vain; let him rather study to conciliate God's favour by doing good to all men; let him abstain from violation and adultery: let him not commit theft or murder through the lust of money: nay covet not, O Pamphilus, so much even as the thread of another's needle, for God is ever present and his eye is upon thee.' This will serve in the place of many more passages, which might be adduced, to prove that the comic poets of this period were not only bold declaimers against the vice and immorality of the age they lived in, but that they ventured upon truths and doctrines in religion totally irreconcileable to the popular superstition and idolatries of the heathen world.

It was on the new comedy of the Greeks that the Roman writers in general founded their's, and this they seem to have accomplished by the servile vehicle of translation: it is said that Terence alone translated all Menander's plays, and these by the lowest account amounted to eighty; some authorities more than double them, an improbable number to have been composed by a poet, who died at the age of fifty, or very little after.

Quin et longa dies delebit scripta Menandri,
Et quandoque levis carmina pulvis erunt.

T. FABER.

Menander was born at Athens, the son of Diopethes and Hegesistrata: he was educated in the

school of Theophrastus the peripatetic, Aristotle's successor: at the early age of twenty he began to write for the stage, and his passions seem to have been no less forward and impetuous than his genius; his attachment to the fair sex, and especially to his mistress Glycera, is upon record, and was vehement in the extreme; several of his epistles to that celebrated courtesan, written in a very ardent style, were collected and made public after his decease: the celebrity of his muse, and the brilliancy of his wit, were probably his chief recommendations to that lady's favour; for it should seem that nature had not been very partial to his external, besides which he squinted most egregiously, and was of a temper extremely irascible. If we were to take his character as a writer from no other authorities but of the fragments, we should form a very different idea from that of Pliny, who says he was *omnis luxuriæ interpres*, and this even Plutarch, his avowed panegyrist, is candid enough to admit. Ovid also says—

> The gay Menander charms each youthful heart,
> And Love in every fable claims a part.

However this may be, the remains, which have come down to us, bear the stamp of an austere and gloomy muse rather than of a wanton and voluptuous one; but these it must be owned prove little; Terence is supposed to have copied all his comedies from Menander, except the Phormio and the Hecyra, and he gives us the best insight into the character of his elegant original.

All Greece seems to have joined in lamenting the premature loss of this celebrated poet, who unfortunately perished as he was bathing in the Piræan harbour, to which Ovid alludes in his Ibis—

Comicus ut liquidis periit dum nabat in undis.

This happened in Olymp. CXXII; his first comedy, intitled Orge, was performed in Olymp. CXV. which gives him something less than thirty years for the production of more than one hundred plays, and if we take the former account of his beginning to writefor the stage at the age of twenty, it will agree with what we have before said respecting the age at which he died.

Fatal as was the Piræan sea to the person of this lamented poet, posterity has more cause to execrate that barbarous gulf, which has swallowed up his works; nor his alone, but those of above two hundred other eminent dramatic poets, whose labours are totally lost and extinguished. We have some lines of Callimachus upon the death of Menander, who was one amongst many of his poetic survivors, that paid the tribute of their ingenious sorrow to his memory: nor poets only, but princes bewailed his loss, particularly Ptolemy the son of Lagus, who loved and favoured him very greatly, and maintained a friendly correspondence with him till his death; some of Menander's letters to this prince were published with those addressed to his beloved Glycera.

Though many great authorities coucur in placing Menander decidedly at the head of all the comic writers of his time, yet his contemporaries must have been of a different opinion, or else his rivals were more popular with their judges, for out of one hundred and five comedies, which Apollodorus ascribes to him, he tells us that he obtained only eight prizes, and that Philemon in particular triumphed over him in the suffrages of the theatre very frequently. If these decisions were so glaringly unjust and partial as we are taught to believe they were, we have some sort of apology for the sarcastic question put to his successful competitor, when upon

meeting him he said—'Do you not blush, Philemon, when you prevail over me?' This anecdote, however, at best only proves that Menander rated his own merits very highly, and that, if they were unjustly treated by those, who decided for Philemon, he laid the blame upon the wrong person, and betrayed a very irritable temper upon the occasion.

We have a collection of Menander's fragments, and the titles of seventy-three comedies; the fragments consist only of short sentences, and do not give us the spirit and character of the dialogue, much less of any one entire scene; for though Hertelius has gone further than Grotius and Le Clerc in arranging them under distinct topics, and has brought into one view every passage of a correspondent sort, still it is a mere disjointed medley, interesting only to the curious, but affording little edification to the generality of readers. Many of them however are to be respected for their moral sentiments, some are of a very elevated cast, and others (more in number than I could wish) of a gloomy, acrimonious and morose quality.

Antient authorities are nevertheless so loud in the praise of Menander, that we cannot doubt of his excellence. Quintilian after applauding him for his peculiar address in preserving the manners and distinctions proper to every character he introduces on his scene, adds in general terms, 'that he eclipses every writer of his class, and by the superior brilliancy of his genius throws them all into shade.' He condemns the perverted judgment of his contemporaries for affecting to prefer Philemon on so many occasions; and C. J. Cæsar, whilst he is passing a compliment upon Terence, styles him only *dimidiatum Menandrum*. *Dion Chrysostom* recommends him as a model for all who study to excel in oratory, 'and

let none of our wise men reprehend me,' he adds, 'for preferring Menander to the old comic poets, inasmuch as his art in delineating the various manners and graces is more to be esteemed than all the force and vehemence of the ancient drama.' There is so much classical elegance in the lines, which T. Faber has prefixed to his edition of Terence, particularly in the introductory stanza, and this is withal so apposite to the subject in hand, that I shall conclude this paper by transcribing it.

Sacrum Menandri pectus
Aura jam reliquerat,
Vagulaque animula
Elysias penetrarat oras:
Tum dolore percitæ,
Virgineasque
Suffusæ lacrymis genas,
Huc et illuc cursitarunt
Perque lucos, perque montes,
Perque vallium sinus,
Cursitarunt Gratiæ,
Quærentes sibi
Queis nova sedibus
Templa ponere possent.

No. CL.

Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.

VIRGIL.

THE various authors, who have contributed to the collection of Menander's remains, seem to have extracted from him, as if by general agreement, little else but the most unfavourable delineations of the human character: so far from finding those facetious and sprightly sallies to be expected from a comic writer, those voluptuous descriptions, which Pliny alludes to, or any fragments of the love scenes Ovid tells us he so abounded in, we meet a melancholy display of the miseries, the enormities, the repinings of mankind.

What can be more gloomy and misanthropic than the following strain of discontent, extracted by Eustathius!—

"Suppose some God should say,"—'Die when thou wilt,
Mortal, expect another life on earth;
And for that life make choice of all creation
What thou wilt be; dog, sheep, goat, man, or horse;
For live again thou must; it is thy fate:
Chuse only in what form; there thou art free—'
'So help me, Crato, I wou'd fairly answer—
Let me be all things, any thing but man!
He only of all creatures feels affliction:
The generous horse is valued for his worth,
And dog by merit is preferr'd to dog;
The warrior cock is pamper'd for his courage,
And awes the baser brood—But what is man?
Truth, virtue, valour, how do they avail him?

Of this world's good the first and greatest share
Is flattery's prize; the informer takes the next,
And barefaced knavery garbles what is left.
I'd rather be an ass than what I am,
And see these villains lord it o'er their betters.'

Another fragment presents itself of the same cast, but coloured a little nearer to the hue of comedy—

All creatures are more blest in their condition,
And in their natures worthier than man.
Look at yon ass!—a sorry beast, you'll say,
And such in truth he is—poor, hapless thing!
Yet these his sufferings spring not from himself,
For all that Nature gave him he enjoys.
Whilst we, besides our necessary ills,
Make ourselves sorrows of our own begetting;
If a man sneeze, we're sad—for that's ill luck;
If he traduce us, we run mad with rage;
A dream, a vapour throws us into terrors,
And let the night-owl hoot we melt with fear,
Anxieties, opinions, laws, ambition,
All these are torments we may thank ourselves for.

The reader will observe that these are specimens of a general disgust against mankind, and of discontent with the common lot of human life; as such they can class with the humour of no other character but that of an absolute misanthrope, a kind of Timon: for general invective differs widely from that, which is pointed against any particular vice or folly, and in fact can hardly be considered as falling within the province of comedy in any case.

If Menander has been justly celebrated for his faithful pictures of the living manners of the age he wrote in, we cannot but receive a gloomy impression from the dark and dismal tints in which these sketches are cast; and though the age we live in hath follies and failings enough still to feed the comic

poet's appetite for satire, we may console ourselves in the comparison of our own time with his, provided the stage is to be regarded as a faithful mirror in both instances. It is not however improbable, but the writers of the New Comedy might fall with more severity upon general vices, to revenge themselves for the restrictions they were subjected to with respect to personalities: add to this, that as far as the early Christian writers were concerned in selecting these passages, it may well be supposed they would naturally take the most moral and sententious from amongst the comedies they quoted, and such as afforded grave and useful remarks upon life, harmonizing with their own doctrines and instructions. More especially, it is to be supposed, that they would eagerly catch at any of those passages, which exhibit purer and more worthy notions of the being and providence of God, than the vulgar herd of Heathens were known to entertain: of this cast is the following contemptuous ridicule upon the Pagan ceremony of lustration:

> If your complaints were serious, 'twould be well
> You sought a serious cure, but for weak minds
> Weak med'cines may suffice—Go, call around you
> The women with their purifying water;
> Drug it with salt and lentils, and then take
> A treble sprinkling from the holy mess:
> Now search your heart; if that reproach you not,
> Then and then only you are truly pure.
>
> EX FAMULO MATRIS IDEÆ.

I am sorry to remark, that amongst all the fragments of this poet not one has been preserved, that is stampt with even the slightest commendation of the fair sex: on the contrary I find abundance of invective, chiefly against marriage and married women,

often coarse and always bitter: I may venture to say, if there was a single woman in all Athens, who merited one good word, it is one more than the strictest scrutiny can discover in his remains. Mark how he rails!—

> If such the sex, was not the sentence just,
> That rivetted Prometheus to his rock?—
> —Why, for what crime?—A spark, a little spark;
> But, oh ye Gods! how infinite the mischief—
> That little spark gave being to a woman,
> And let in a new race of plagues to curse us.
> Where is the man that weds? shew me the wretch:
> Woe to his lot!—Insatiable desires,
> His nuptial bed defil'd, poisonings and plots
> And maladies untold—these are the fruits
> Of marriage, these the blessings of a wife.

The poet, who can thus lend his wit to libel the greatest blessing of life, may well be ingenious in depreciating life itself—

> The lot of all most fortunate is his,
> Who having staid just long enough on earth
> To feast his sight with this fair face of nature,
> Sun, sea, and clouds, and Heaven's bright starry fires,
> Drops without pain into an early grave.
> For what is life, the longest life of man,
> But the same scene repeated o'er and o'er?
> A few more ling'ring days to be consum'd
> In throngs and crowds, with sharpers, knaves and thieves;
> From such the speediest riddance is the best.

Having given some passages from this poet, where he speaks in the character of a misanthropist, it is but justice to exhibit him as a moralist: if the following fragment suggests no new ideas upon the subject of *Envy*, it will at least serve to convince us

that mankind in all ages have thought alike upon that despicable passion—

Thou seem'st to me, young man, not to perceive
That every thing contains within itself
The seeds and sources of its own corruption:
The cankering rust corrodes the brightest steel;
The moth frets out your garment, and the worm
Eats its slow way into the solid oak;
But Envy, of all evil things the worst,
The same to-day, to morrow, and for ever,
Saps and consumes the heart in which it lurks.

In the fragment next ensuing an old man is reproved for the vice of covetousness; there is a delicacy in the manner of it, that well becomes both the age and condition of the speaker, for he is a youth, and son to the character whom he addresses: this fragment is extracted from the comedy entitled Dyscolus (the Churl) which Plautus is said to have translated and performed under its original title; but of this only a few fragments remain in our volume of that poet; probably the father herein addressed is the person who gives the name to the comedy—

Weak is the vanity, that boasts of riches,
For they are fleeting things; were they not such,
Could they be your's to all succeeding time,
'Twere wise to let none share in the possession,
But if whate'er you have is held of fortune
And not of right inherent, why, my father,
Why with such niggard jealousy engross
What the next hour may ravish from your grasp,
And cast into some worthless favourite's lap?
Snatch then the swift occasion while 'tis your's;
Put this unstable boon to noble uses;
Foster the wants of men, impart your wealth,
And purchase friends; 'twill be more lasting treasure,
And, when misfortune comes, your best resource.

There is another fragment of a more comic sort, which is a relique of The Minstrel, pointed at the same vice—

Ne'er trust me, Phanias, but I thought till now,
That you rich fellows had the knack of sleeping
A good sound nap, that held you for the night;
And not like us poor rogues, who toss and turn,
Sighing, *Ah me!* and grumbling at our duns:
But now I find, in spite of all your money,
You rest no better than your needy neighbours,
And sorrow is the common lot of all.

We are indebted to Plutarch for a very respectable fragment of his favourite poet; he quotes it for the consolatory advice it contains, and addresses it to Apollonius; I give it to my readers as one of the most valuable specimens of its author.

If you, O Trophimus, and you alone
Of all your mother's sons have Nature's charter
For privilege of pleasures uncontroul'd,
With full exemption from the strokes of Fortune,
And that some god hath ratified the grant,
You then with cause may vent your loud reproach,
For he hath broke your charter and betray'd you:
But if you live and breathe the common air
On the same terms as we do, then I tell you,
And tell it in the tragic poet's words—
Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils—
The sum of which philosophy is this—
You are a man, and therefore Fortune's sport,
This hour exalted and the next abas'd:
You are a man, and, tho' by nature weak,
By nature arrogant, climbing to heights
That mock your reach and crush you in the fall:
Nor was the blessing you have lost the best
Of all life's blessings, nor is your misfortune
The worst of its afflictions; therefore, Trophimus,
Make it not such by overstrain'd complaints,
But to your disappointment suit your sorrow.

The lines in Italics quoted from Shakspere's Julius Cæsar, not only correspond with the exact meaning of the original, but are also apposite as a quotation from a tragic poet, Menander himself having applied the words of some one of the writers of tragedy, probably Euripides.

Amongst the smaller fragments there are several good apothegms, some brief moral maxims well expressed, and though not many of those witty points, which are so frequent in Aristophanes, yet there are some specimens of the *vis comica*, which have a very ingenious turn of words in their own tongue; but generally such passages elude translation.—This quaint confession from the mouth of an old miser is of that sort.—'I own I am rich, abominably rich; all the world accuses me of being a very warm old fellow, but not a soul alive can slander me so far as to say I am a happy one.'—The following scrap once belonged to The Thrasyleon:

> You say not always wisely, *Know thyself!*
> Know others, oft times is the better maxim.

A strong moral truth told with epigrammatic neatness strikes me in this pointed remark—

> Of all bad things, with which mankind are curst,
> Their own bad tempers surely are the worst.

I could not pass over a short but touching apostrophe quoted from the comedy of The Olynthian—

> What pity 'tis, when happy Nature rears
> A noble pile, that Fortune should o'erthrow it!

I shall conclude with a fragment of the declamatory sort, not as offering any novelty either in the senti-

ment or expression, but simply for the sake of contrasting it with other specimens—

> If you wou'd know of what frail stuff you're made,
> Go to the tombs of the illustrious Dead;
> There rest the bones of Kings, there Tyrants rot;
> There sleep the Rich, the Noble, and the Wise;
> There Pride, Ambition, Beauty's fairest form,
> All dust alike, compound one common mass:
> Reflect on these, and in them see yourself.

I now take leave of Menander, the most renowned of the writers of the latter comedy, and if my readers shall remark, that these fragments of a poet so eminent in his time, offer nothing which has not been said over and over again by poets of our own, I hope it will serve to strengthen their conviction, that frequently there shall be a coincidence of sentiment and expression between authors without communication; for it will hardly be supposed that plagiarisms have been committed upon these fragments, and much less upon others of more obscurity, which I have in former papers introduced into our language.

In short I should be happy, if any thing I have now done or may hereafter do, shall serve to mitigate the zeal of critics for detecting their contemporaries in pretended pilferings and misdemeanours, where the *letter* of the law may perhaps appear against them, but the *spirit* of it, if interpreted with candour, condemns them not. I would call upon them, as Terence did upon his audience, to reflect that men in all ages will think and speak alike.—

> *Nullum est jam dictum, quod non dictum sit prius:*
> *Quare æquum est vos cognoscere atque ignoscere,*
> *Quæ veteres factitarunt si faciunt novi.*

NUMBER CLI.

Habent tamen et alii quoque comici, si cum venia legantur, quædam, quæ possis decerpere, et præcipue Philemon; *qui, ut pravis sui temporis judiciis Menandro sæpe prælatus est, ita consensu tamen omnium meruit esse secundus.*

QUINTIL. LIB. X.

THERE is not amongst all the Greek dramatic poets a more amiable character than Philemon: he was a Syracusan by Suidas's account, but Strabo says he was born in Solæ, a city of Cilicia: he was some years older than Menander, and no unworthy rival of that poet, though more frequently successful in his competitions with him than the critics in general seem to think he deserved to be: of this we can form little or no judgment; they who had access to the works of both authors, had the best materials to decide upon. Apuleius however speaks rather doubtingly in the comparison, for he says of Philemon that he was *fortasse impar*; to which he subjoins, that 'though his frequent triumphs over Menander are not reputable to insist upon, yet there are to be found in him many witty strokes, plots ingeniously disposed, discoveries strikingly brought to light, characters well adapted to their parts, sentiments that accord with human life;'—*Joca non infra soccum, seria non usque cothurnum*, viz. 'Jests that do not degrade the sock, gravity that does not intrench upon the buskin.'

Philemon lived to the extraordinary age of one hundred and one years, in which time he composed ninety comedies; a competent collection it must be

owned, though not to be compared to the bulk of Menander's productions, who in half the time wrote more in number, and with a rapidity, for which we have his own word, 'for when I have once determined upon the plot,' says he, 'I consider the work as finished.' The longevity of Philemon was the result of great temperance and a placid frame of mind: frugal to a degree that subjected him to the charge of avarice, he never weakened his faculties and constitution by excess, and as he summed up all his wishes in one rational and moderate petition to Heaven, which throws a most favourable light upon his character, it is with pleasure I record it. 'I pray for health in the first place; in the next for success in my undertakings; thirdly, for a chearful heart; and lastly, to be out of debt to all mankind.' This temperate petition seems to have been granted in all particulars, he was blessed with a long and healthful life; he was successful in his undertakings to a degree, which posterity seems to think above his merits, and he triumphed over all his competitors, more perhaps through the suavity of his manners than from any actual superiority of his talents: that he was of a gay and happy spirit there is every reason to believe, and his œconomy secured to him that independent competency, which put him in possession of the final object of his wishes. As he lived in constant serenity of mind, so he died without pain of body; for having called together a number of his friends to the reading of a play, which he had newly finished, and sitting, as was the custom in that serene climate, under the open canopy of Heaven, an unforeseen fall of rain broke up the company just when the old man had got into his third act in the very warmest interests of his fable: his hearers, disappointed by this unluckly check to their

entertainment, interceded with him for the remainder on the day following, to which he readily assented; and a great company being then assembled, whom the fame of the rehearsal had brought together, they sate a considerable time in eager expectation of the poet, till wearied out with waiting, and unable to account for his impunctuality, some of his intimates were dispatched in quest of him, who, having entered his house and made their way to his chamber, found the old man dead on his couch, in his usual meditating posture, his features placid and composed, and with every symptom that indicated a death without pain or struggle.

This is Apuleius's account, but Oelian embellishes the story with a vision, in which he pretends that nine fair damsels appeared to Philemon, and upon his accosting them as they were going out of the door, demanding why they would leave him, they told him it was because it was not permitted to man to hold converse with the Immortals: upon waking from this trance or vision, Philemon related it to his page, and then getting up returned to his studies, and put the last hand to the comedy he was employed upon: 'That done,' says Oelian, 'he stretched himself on his couch and quietly expired.' From this silly anecdote he draws an inference, which without his help the world had probably discovered, viz. 'That Philemon truly was in favour with the Muses.'

Valerius Maximus varies from both these authors in his account of the death of this aged poet; he tells us Philemon was suffocated by a sudden fit of laughter upon seeing an ass, who had found his way into the house, devour a plate of figs, which his page had provided for him; that he called out to the boy to drive away the ass, but when this order was not

executed before the animal had emptied the plate, he bade his page pour out a goblet of wine and present it to the plunderer to compleat his entertainment; tickled with the pleasantry of this conceit, and no less with the grotesque attitude and adventure of the animal, Philemon was seized with a fit of laughing, and in that fit expired.

The fragments of Philemon are in general of a sentimental, tender cast, and though they enforce sound and strict morality, yet no one instance occurs of that gloomy misanthropy, that harsh and dogmatizing spirit, which too often marks the maxims of his more illustrious rival: the following specimen will illustrate what I assert—It is clear that our poet has Æschylus in his eye.

> All are not just, because they do no wrong,
> But he, who will not wrong me when he may,
> He is the truly Just. I praise not them,
> Who in their petty dealings pilfer not;
> But him, whose conscience spurns a secret fraud,
> When he might plunder and defy surprize:
> His be the praise, who looking down with scorn
> On the false judgment of the partial herd,
> Consults his own clear heart, and boldly dares
> To be, not to be thought an honest Man.

I flatter myself the reader will be pleased with the following animated apostrophe, which is a fragment of The Ignifer—

> Now by the Gods, it is not in the power
> Of painting or of sculpture to express
> Aught so divine as the fair form of Truth!
> The creatures of their art may catch the eye,
> But her sweet nature captivates the soul.

I shall next produce a passage from The Pyrrhus, which breathes so soft and placid a spirit, and so

perfectly harmonizes with the amiable character of the poet I am reviewing, that it is with pleasure I present it to my readers—

Philosophers consume much time and pains
To seek the Sovereign Good, nor is there one,
Who yet hath struck upon it: Virtue some,
And Prudence some contend for, whilst the knot
Grows harder by their struggle to untie it.
I, a mere clown, in turning up the soil
Have dug the secret forth—All-gracious Jove!
'Tis Peace, most lovely and of all belov'd;
Peace is the bounteous Goddess, who bestows
Weddings and holidays and joyous feasts,
Relations, friends, health, plenty, social comforts
And pleasures, which alone make life a blessing.

Stobæus has preserved a fragment of The Ephebus, which is of a mild and plaintive character; though it speaks the language of the deepest sorrow, it speaks at the same time the language of humanity; there is no turbulence, no invective; it is calculated to move our pity, not excite our horror—

'Tis not on them alone, who tempt the sea,
That the storm breaks, it whelms e'en us, O Laches,
Whether we pace the open colonnade,
Or to the inmost shelter of our house
Shrink from its rage. The sailor for a day,
A night perhaps, is bandied up and down,
And then anon reposes, when the wind
Veers to the wisht-for point, and wafts him home:
But I know no repose; not one day only,
But every day to the last hour of life
Deeper and deeper I am plung'd in woe.

In all the remains of this engaging author there seems a characteristic gentleness of manners; where he gives advice, it is recommended rather than imposed; his reproofs are softened with such an air

of good humour, as gives a grace to instruction, and smiles while it corrects: can experience tutor indiscretion in milder terms than these?

O Cleon, cease to trifle thus with life:
A mind, so barren of experience,
Can hoard up nought but misery, believe me.
The shipwreckt mariner must sink outright,
Who makes no effort to regain the shore;
The needy wretch, who never learnt a trade,
And will not work, must starve—*What then?*—you cry—
My riches—Frail security—*My farms*,
My houses, my estate—Alas! my friend,
Fortune makes quick dispatch, and in a day
Can strip you bare as beggary itself.
Grant that you now had piloted your bark
Into good fortune's haven, anchor'd there,
And moor'd her safe as caution cou'd devise;
Yet if the headstrong passions seize the helm
And turn her out to sea, the stormy gusts
Shall rise and blow you out of sight of port,
Never ro reach prosperity again—
What tell you me? have I not friends to fly to?
I have: And will not those kind friends protect me?—
Better it were you shall not need their service,
And so not make the trial: Much I fear
Your sinking hand wou'd only grasp a shade.

Many of his maxims and remarks are neatly expressed and ingeniously conceived; they have all a tincture of pleasantry, which, without impairing the morality or good sense they convey, takes off the gloom and solemnity, which the same thoughts, otherwise expressed, might have.

Two words of nonsense are two words too much;
Whole volumes of good sense will never tire.
What multitudes of lines hath Homer wrote!
Who ever thought he wrote one line too much?

Again—

If what we have we use not, and still covet
What we have not, we are cajol'd by fortune
Of present bliss, of future by ourselves.

Still to be rich is still to be unhappy;
Still to be envied, hated and abus'd;
Still to commence new law suits, new vexations;
Still to be carking, still to be collecting,
Only to make your funeral a feast,
And hoard up riches for a thriftless heir:
Let me be light in purse and light in heart;
Give me small means, but give content withal,
Only preserve me from the law, kind Gods,
And I will thank you for my poverty.

Extremes of fortune are true Wisdom's test,
And he's of men most wise, who bears them best.

NUMBER CLII.

The poet Diphilus was a native of Sinope, a city of Pontus, and contemporary with Menander. Clemens Alexandrinus applauds him for his comic wit and humour; Eusebius says the same, and adds a further encomium in respect of the sententious and moral character of his drama. The poet Plautus speaks of him in his prologue to The Casina, and acknowledges the excellence of the original upon which he had formed his comedy. He died at Smyrna, a city of Ionia, and was author of one hundred comedies, of which we have a list of two-and-thirty titles, and no inconsiderable collection of fragments; out of these I have selected the following example—

We have a notable good law at Corinth,
Where, if an idle fellow outruns reason,
Feasting and junketing at furious cost,
The sumptuary proctor calls upon him
And thus begins to sift him.—You live well,
But have you well to live? You squander freely,
Have you the wherewithal? Have you the fund
For these out-goings? If you have, go on!
If you have not, we'll stop you in good time
Before you outrun honesty; for he,
Who lives we know not how, must live by plunder;
Either he picks a purse, or robs a house,
Or is accomplice with some knavish gang,
Or thrusts himself in crowds to play th' informer,
And put his perjur'd evidence to sale:
This a well-order'd city will not suffer:
Such vermin we expel.—*And you do wisely:*
But what is this to me?—Why, this it is:
Here we behold you every day at work,
Living forsooth! not as your neighbours live,

But richly, royally, ye gods!—Why, man,
We cannot get a fish for love or money,
You swallow the whole produce of the sea:
You've driven our citizens to browze on cabbage:
A sprig of parsley sets them all a-fighting,
As at the Isthmian games: if hare, or partridge,
Or but a simple thrush comes to the market,
Quick, at a word you snap him: By the gods!
Hunt Athens through, you shall not find a feather
But in your kitchen; and for wine, 'tis gold—
Not to be purchas'd—We may drink the ditches.

Apollodorus Gelous, in the same period with the poets abovementioned, was a writer high in fame, and author of many comedies, of all which the titles of eight only and some few fragments now remain: it is generally understood that the Phormio and Hecyra of Terence are copied from this poet. Very little has been preserved from the wreck of this author's writings that can tempt me to a translation; a few short specimens however, according to custom, are submitted—

How sweet were life, how placid and serene,
Were others but as gentle as ourselves:
But if we must consort with apes and monkies,
We must be brutes like them—O life of sorrow!

What do you trust to, Father? To your money?
Fortune indeed to those who have it not
Will sometimes give it: but 'tis done in malice,
Merely that she may take it back again.

Athenæus has rescued a little stroke of raillery, which is ludicrous enough—

Go to! make fast your gates with bars and bolts;
But never chamber door was shut so close,
But cats and cuckold-makers wou'd creep thro' it.

The following has some point in it, but comes ill into translation, or, more properly speaking, is ill translated—

Youth and old age have their respective humours;
And son by privilege can say to father,
Were you not once as young as I am now?
Not so the father; he cannot demand,
Were you not once as old as I am now?

There is something pleasing in the following natural description of a friendly welcome—

There is a certain hospitable air
In a friend's house, that tells me I am welcome:
The porter opens to me with a smile;
The yard dog wags his tail, the servant runs,
Beats up the cushion, spreads the couch, and says—
Sit down, good Sir! e'er I can say I'm weary.

Philippidas, the son of Philocles, was another of this illustrious band of contemporary and rival authors: his extreme sensibility was the cause of his death, for the sudden transport, occasioned by the unexpected success of one of his comedies, put a period to his life; the poet however was at this time very aged. Donatus informs us that Philippidas was in the highest favour with Lysimachus, to whom he recommended himself not by the common modes of flattery, but by his amiable and virtuous qualities; the interest he had with Lysimachus he ever employed to the most honourable purposes, and thereby disposed him to confer many great and useful favours upon the people of Athens: so highly did his princely patron esteem this venerable man, that whenever he set out upon any expedition, and chanced upon Philippidas in his way, he accounted it as the happiest prognostic of good fortune.—'What is there,' said Lysimachus to him upon a

certain occasion, 'which Philippidas would wish I should impart to him?'—'Any thing,' replied the poet, 'but your secrets.'

Posidippus, with whom I shall conclude, was a Macedonian, born at Cassandria, and the son of Cyniscus. Abundant testimonies are to be found in the old grammarians of the celebrity of this poet; few fragments of his comedies have descended to us, and the titles only of twelve. He may be reckoned the last of the comic poets, as it was not till three years after the death of Menander that he began to write for the Athenian stage, and posterior to him I know of no author, who has bequeathed even his name to posterity: Here then concludes the history of the Greek stage; below this period it is in vain to search for genius worth recording; Grecian literature and Grecian liberty expired together; a succession of sophists, pædagogues and grammarians filled the posts of those illustrious wits, whose spirit, fostered by freedom, soared to such heights as left the Roman poets little else except the secondary fame of imitation.

I have now fulfilled what I may be allowed to call my literary engagements; in the course of which I have expended no small pains and attention in dragging from obscurity relicks buried in the rubbish of the darker ages, when the whole world seemed to conspire against Genius; when learning had degenerated into sophism, and religion was made a theme of metaphysical subtilty, serving, as it should seem, no other purpose but to puzzle and confound, to inflame the passions and to perplex the head. Then it was, the fathers of the church, in whose hands these authors were, held it a point of conscience to destroy the idols of the

stage, as they had already destroyed the idols of the temple, and to bury heathen wit in the same grave with heathen superstition; their poets and their gods were to be exterminated alike. To the more enlightened taste, or rather perhaps to the lucky partiality, of Chrysostom alone we owe the preservation of Aristophanes. Continually engaged in argumentative and controversial writings there were some, who occasionally condescended to quote a passage, as it served their purpose, from these proscribed comedies, either to help out their wits or illustrate their meaning; and these scraps and splinters being swept together by some few patient collectors, who had charity enough to work upon the wreck, posterity hath been put into possession of these gleanings of the comic stage of Athens, in addition to the more entire and inestimable remains of Aristophanes. It has been my task (and I believe it is the first of the sort attempted in our language) to avail myself of these friendly guides for making something like a regular detail of the names, characters and productions of these lost, but once illustrious, poets, and to give to the public such as I conceive to be the best of their fragments in an English translation. This part of my general undertaking being heavier than all the rest to myself, I was much afraid it would have proved so to my readers also; but their candid reception of these papers in particular, and the encouraging voice of my profest reviewers, have banished that anxiety from my mind, and enabled me to proceed with chearfulness to the end.

There is one part however of these papers, in which I conceive I have been misunderstood as having carried my attack against the moral doctrines of Socrates, and of this I am interested to exculpate myself; my subject led me to refer to certain anec-

OBSERVER.

——Multorum providus urbes
Et mores hominum inspexit—— HORAT.

BY RICHARD CUMBERLAND, ESQ.

N° 121—152.

dotes unfavourable to his private character, but I studiously marked those passages by observing that there was no design to glance at his moral doctrines, and at the same time quoted the authorities upon which those anecdotes rest; when any scholar will convince me that these were futile and malicious tales, I will retract all credit in them and thank him for the conviction: as for the purity of Socrates's doctrines I never attempted to impeach it; of the purity of his character I must continue to think there is much cause to doubt. The learned bishop Sherlock, in his fourth discourse, may be referred to upon this subject: he there says, 'that the corrupt example of Socrates was a dead weight upon the purity of his doctrine, and tended to perpetuate superstition in the world.'---Though I am aware that the corrupt example here alluded to respects his religious practice, yet, surely, if the preacher of Christianity was interested to shew the corrupt example of Socrates in this light, the friend of Christianity may be allowed to represent it in another point of view, and by fair authorities to exhibit what the heathens themselves have reported of this famous philosopher, whose moral purity is by some taken merely upon trust, by others designedly extolled to the skies for the sake of opposing character to character, and by an audacious comparison with Christ disparaging the Divinity of the World's Redeemer. I should expect then, that as far as truth and good authorities warrant, I am as free to discuss the private vices and impurities of Socrates, as those of Mahomet, which the learned prelate abovementioned most eloquently displays in his parallel between Christ and that Impostor: the Deist will perhaps be much interested to support his favourite philosopher, and will care little for the prophet: the modern Plato-

nist, who is ingenious to erect a new system of natural religion out of the ruins of heathen idolatry, may be zealous to defend the founder of his faith, and his anger I must submit to incur; but it is not quite so easy to bear the reproof of friends, from whom I have not deserved it, and in whose service I have drawn that anger upon myself.

As for my defence of Aristophanes against the groundless charge of having taken bribes from the enemies of Socrates, to attack him for the purpose of paving the way to his public trial, that I observe hath been on all hands admitted; for in truth the facts and dates on which it turns, cannot be contested; they are decisive for his exculpation.

Easy as it has been to clear Aristophanes from the charge of conspiring against the life of Socrates, he would be a hardy advocate, who should attempt to defend his personal attack upon that philosopher in his comedy of The Clouds. The outcry has been kept up for so many ages, that now to combat it would be a task indeed; there are so many, who join in it, without having examined into the merits of the case, and an appeal to the practice of the stage in those times, as likewise to the comedy itself, would affect so few amongst the many, who pretend to pronounce upon the offence, that the man, who undertook to soften general prejudices, must undertake to translate The Clouds; and to transfuse the original spirit of such a composition into a modern language would be no easy work.

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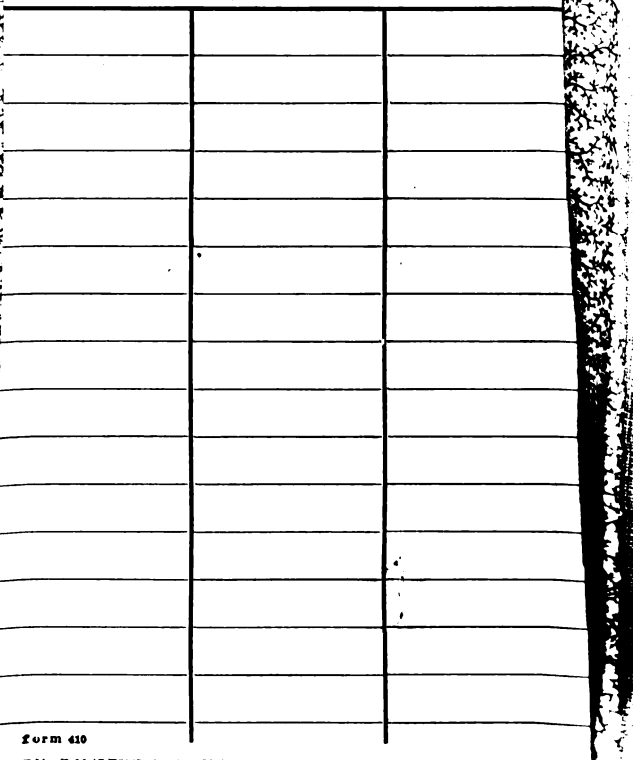
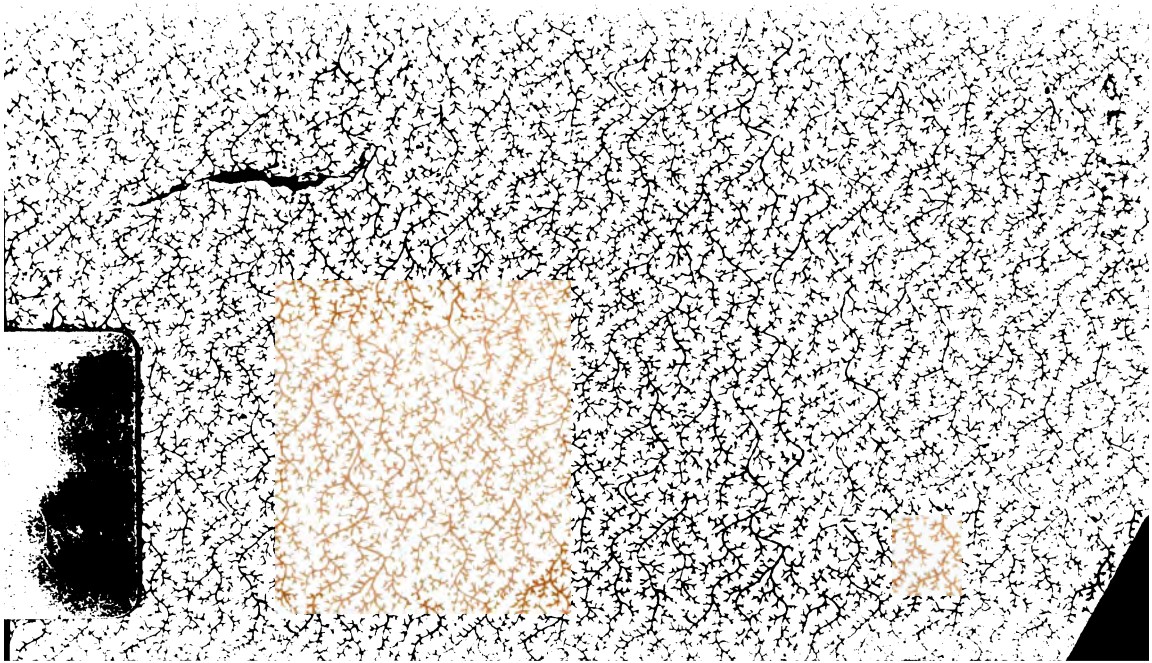
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